Arya Samaj and Indians Abroad

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by
PANDIT NARDEV VEDALANKAR
- and -
MANOHAR SOMERA

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APPRECIATION

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COVER PICTURES

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: 21 CARLISLE STREET, DURBAN
ARYA PRATINIDHI SABHA, SOUTH AFRICA

गुरुकुल कांगड़ी विश्वविद्यालय
कृपया पुस्तक के ऊपर कोई निशान आदि
न लगायें।
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History

ARYA SAMAJ AND INDIANS ABROAD

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by
PANDIT NARDEV VEDALANKAR
AND
MANOHAR SOMERA, B.A., M.Ed.

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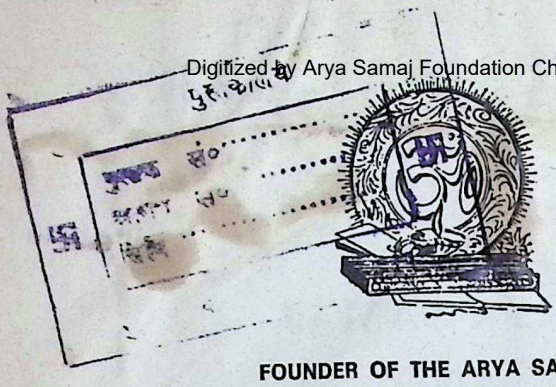

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FOUNDER OF THE ARYA SAMAJ

MAHARSHI DAYANAND SARASWATI

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I.I.T.B. Section

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FOREWORD

I take pleasure in introducing to the general public this foreword to the book which deals with the work, achievements and problems of the Arya Samaj Abroad.

The Arya Samaj has made history not only in India but also in far-off lands across the seas, such as South Africa, Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, East Africa, Guyana, Surinam, Trinidad, Mauritius, Fiji, Thailand, Singapore, Burma etc. by its service especially to the people of Indian origin. The advent of the Arya Samaj was hailed as the arrival of a saviour and a pioneer.

The Arya Samaj has creditably acquitted itself of its responsibilities and discharged its duties admirably. Its impact on the people in different lands has been tremendous and this is visible in a large number of Arya Samaj units and network of Arya Samaj institutions - educational, medical, charitable and philanthropic. It is also seen in the general enlightenment, upliftment, love for India, attachment to their country of adoption and what is best in religious and cultural heritage of India. My personal experience and observation testify to this fact.

The significance of Arya Samaj and its work can well be assessed by studying the early history of the overseas Indians who were recruited and sent abroad by the British Government with the object of providing the white settlers with cheap labour on their agricultural farms or for clearing dense forests in order to make the place worth inhabiting. Their number stood in lacs and the majority of them were poor, illiterate and simple.

Their condition was worse than slaves. Their tale of woes and suffering was long and pathetic. They were subjected to all sorts of humiliation, persecution, insult and exploitation. They were denied even the legitimate human rights.

The process of these persecution and fraud of the agents of the British Government augmented their woes. But they felt helpless. Their exploitation did not come to an end here. To complete the process of their subservience and degradation. systematic attempts were brought into play to snap their religious, cultural and linguistic ties with India and link them up with alien faiths especially with Christianity. This was the time when Arya Samaj reached those regions and its message was conveyed especially to Hindus. A number of Aryan scholars, sanyasins, preachers and leaders began to visit those regions from time to time with the result that a wonderful metamorphosis took place in their religious and cultural life, and the Arya Samaj came to be recognised as their saviour.

Arya Samaj brought in national awakening too in those lands just as it has done in India.

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Today they feel proud of their cultural and religious heritage and also their mother tongue. The majority of the foreign delegates to the International Hindi Conference which was recently held at Nagpur belonged to the overseas Indians and in that the number of Arya Samajist delegates preponderated. It is not a rare phenomenon. Arya Samajists are in the forefront to popularise the Hindi Examinations of Hindi Sahitya Sammelan and Wardha.

To corroborate all this I refer hereunder to a tribute that was paid to Swami Dayanand Saraswati by the late Reverend C.F. Andrews who was outside the pale of Arya Samaj and a noted upholder of the cause of overseas Indians. He Says:

> I have recently had an experience while I was abroad which I shall not easily forget. I have seen, in East Africa, the Arya Samaj flourishing and thriving in the midst of a singularly foreign and unpropitious environment. While other personal religious loyalties and beliefs were struggling for a breath of fresh air in a stifling situation to survive, the Arya Samaj was taking root in the soil and was putting forth new shoots.
>
> If the Arya Samaj were stationary, unprogressive, fixed in infallible dogmas, then indeed there might be less hope for it in the future. But I have found in these distant lands across the sea, Fiji, and Australia as well as in East Africa, a singular power to adaptation to environment. While the central ideal has been held fast, the details have been profoundly modified. And that great central ideal has always appealed to me, amidst these outward changes, to be essentially one with the truth of the supreme culture of the Vedic age and of its heritage as Indians' greatest possession of this wonderful heritage. Indians today have returned after many wanderings - through Swami Dayanand to their ancient heritage which has once more become for them an abiding faith, a personal possession. Such a faith is not merely patriotism, it is something deeper, it is religion.
>
> **(General Survey of the Life and Teachings of Swami Dayanand)**

At another place he writes:-

> What the Arya Samaj is doing for the overseas Indians has greatly impressed me. Arya Samaj is the only institution which fosters love for Motherland (India) in the hearts of overseas Indians, popularises national language, Hindi, in a special way and keeps a vigilant eye on safeguarding the interest of ancient Aryan culture to which every Indian has a birthright. In all overseas colonies lying in South Africa, Rhodesia, Kenya, Uganda, Zanzibar, Tanganyika, Fiji, Mauritius, Malaya and Singapore etc. Arya Samaj has propagated and served Vedic Dharma and dis-

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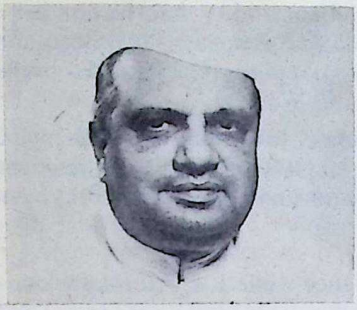
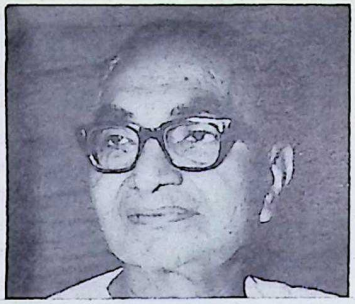
Officials - 1975



Mr Pratapsingh Shoorji Vallabhdas
President: Arya Samaj Centenary Celebrations Committee, 1975.



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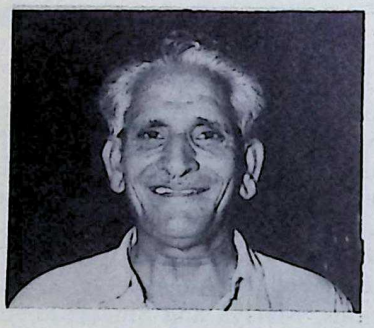

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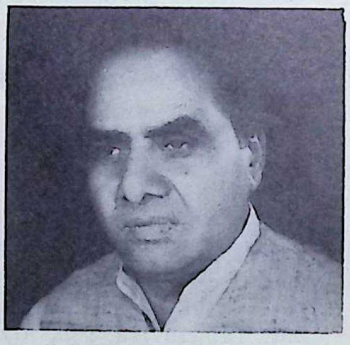

Mr Om Prakash Tyagi
General Secretary

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seminated Aryan culture and I have been giving vent to my assessment through the columns of newspapers.

Arya Samaj has vitality and ambition. I therefore, believe that its future is bright and hopeful. Of all the Indian societies, which can render service to the overseas Indians, no one can be more dynamic, progressive, enterprising and powerful than the Arya Samaj.

(Autobiography of Swami Bhawani Dayal, Sannyasi, South Africa)

This is one phase of our foreign mission, the other is concerned with conveying of the message of Arya Samaj to the natives of Asian, African, American, and European countries.

The Message of Arya Samaj is universal and meant for the whole of mankind. It tends to make all people Aryas (nobles), physically and spiritually developed, materially prosperous, mentally and morally uplifted, and socially, nationally and internationally united. The work which we have done in this direction through written and vocal media can rightly be called spade work. We have of late, embarked upon it in a systematic way and are determined to further and consolidate it keeping in view the people who are steeped in materialism but who have an intense urge for mental peace.

The book under reference contains a comprehensive account of our work which is done especially among overseas Indians and has been brought out to meet a persistent demand.

Our thanks are due to Shri Nardevji, Snatak of South Africa who at my request undertook this work. He has spared no pains and efforts to make it a worthwile publication of genuine and permanent value. His services to the cause of Arya Samaj and Arya Bhasha Hindi in South Africa are too well-known and need no mention.

I offer on behalf of Sarvadeshik Arya Pratinidhi Sabha and on my own behalf hearty thanks to the Arya Pratinidhi Sabha, South Africa as well as to its president, Mr S. Chotai, for bringing it out at their own cost. This co-operation is really valuable and encouraging. It is a praiseworthy offering to the Grand 'Yajna' of Arya Samaj Foundation Centenary.

My thanks are also due to all gentlemen and organizations whose co-operation and help were available to Pt. Nardevji and Arya Pratinidhi Sabha of South Africa in this undertaking.

O.P. Tyagi, M.P.
Secretary
Sarvadeshik Arya Pratinidhi Sabha
(International Aryan League)

3-5 Maharshi Dayanand Bhawan
Ramlila Maidan, New Delhi, India.
25.8.1975.

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PREFACE

Associated with the International Arya Samaj Foundation Centenary Celebrations to be held in India this year two requests were made by the Sarvadeshik Arya Pratinidhi Sabha of India to our Sabha. They were firstly, that we undertake the writing of the book and secondly, we bear the cost of its production as our contribution to the Centenary Celebrations. Both of these requests were gladly accepted by our Sabha. Pandit Nardevji Vedalankar who is the Chief Vedic Priest in South Africa and who has considerable experience in writing books and who has deep knowledge of the religious and cultural life of the Indian people living in different parts of the world was entrusted with the task of being the author of this book. But because of his inadequacy in the English language the assistance of Mr. Manohar Somera, M.Ed., of Umkomaas had to be sought. Mr Somera's co-operation was readily forthcoming.

Pandit Nardevji arrived in South Africa as a Snatak of Gurukul Kangri in 1947 to work as a Gujerati teacher. But true to the teachings of his "alma mater" he has served unceasingly with great energy and in a spirit of inimitable humility, dedication and public-spiritedness the cause of Arya Samaj, Vedic Religion and the Hindi language for over a quarter of a century. Pandit Nardevji is the Chairman of Veda Niketan (the Sabha's Prachar Samiti) and also of the Vedic Purohit Mandal.

Mr M. Somera is an educationist, being the Vice Principal of a large Indian High School in Umzinto. He resides in Umkomaas about 50 kilometres away from Durban and takes an active interest in the activities of the local Arya Samaj.

The authors of this book have attempted after their painstaking studies to present to the readers a glimpse of the religious, cultural and social life of the peoplé who left India as labourers, traders and for other reasons and settled abroad.

It will be noticed that in the different countries conditions are not identical but there are many matters which are common to all people. These include their religious way of life, their festivals and institutions. It is quite significant that the Arya Samaj has played a leading role everywhere in safeguarding the people's cultural heritage from foreign assaults. In every country the influence of westernisation and proselytisation is tremendous. That our people have been able to face overwhelming odds and still retain their identity is no mean achievement. However, although the urge to maintain its cultural and reli-

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gious contact with India is to be found everywhere many have succumbed and fallen by the wayside. Hinduism has lost thousands of its brethren to other folds for several reasons, e.g., religious disability, social injustice, economic benefits and political gains.

Religious progress of any community cannot be seen in isolation. It has to be viewed from a political angle. The political status of Indians living abroad is secure somewhere, insecure at other places and one of uncertainty elsewhere.

On the occasion of the Arya Samaj Centenary Celebration it is our fervent prayer that the Indians living abroad, whilst leading a progressive religious life will make their fullest contribution to the land of their birth and adoption and work in full harmony and co-operation with all the people living in the country.

The Sabha expresses its thanks to both Pandit Nardevji Vedalankar and Mr Somera for the invaluable service rendered by undertaking to write this book.

We trust that it will be well received not only by the Arya Samajic world but by others as well.

Sukhraj Chotai B.A., B.Ed.
President - Arya Pratinidhi Sabha
South Africa

5.10.1975

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INTRODUCTION

When the revered General Secretary of the Sarvadeshik Arya Pratinidhi Sabha made a request that the writing and compilation of the history of the Arya Samaj abroad be undertaken by the Arya Pratinidhi Sabha of South Africa, it gave rise to some misgivings among the officials of the Sabha. The cause was a worthy one, but to do justice to such a task seemed to be difficult without the necessary research.

In order not to shirk a responsibility, the Pratinidhi Sabha began making the arrangements for such a work to be published. The problems then began to emerge although writers had already volunteered to assist the Sabha. Many countries abroad, where the Arya Samaj movement has been established, have not yet compiled and published suitable historical accounts of the work of the Samaj. The material supplied by the Sarvadeshik Sabha comprised some historical surveys that were comprehensive and many others that were very sketchy. Urgent questionnaires were sent out for additional information and in many cases the responses were tardy.

The writers commenced sifting the material required from the few books that were available. Some Samajes had prepared accounts specially for the proposed publication to mark the Centenary of the Arya Samaj. In order to give a true historical perspective, the articles supplied were completely revised with just the historical facts being given the necessary prominence. The views and opinions of the various contributors and writers were reduced to the aspects that appeared to be the most significant.

In 1974 it was decided to mark the Silver Jubilee of the Hindi Shiksha Sangh of South Africa with a publication that was expected to be a historical record of the Hindi language abroad. Information was also obtained from many parts of the world. (But it is regretted that the intended publication has not yet materialised.) In March and April of 1974, the Sasta Sahitya Mandal of Delhi published two issues that were classified as "Indians Abroad Issues" of the Journal, Jivan Sahitya, which is edited by Mr Banarasidas Chaturvedi and Mr Yashpal Jain. These issues give a good account of the life of the Indians that have settled abroad.

A great deal of interest has been shown abroad in the annual religious examinations that are conducted by the Veda Niketan section of the Arya Pratinidhi Sabha of South Africa. This also led to the Veda

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Niketan gaining the acquaintance of Hindu religious organizations in many parts of the world. These contacts were of tremendous value for it thus became possible to collect the vast amount of material that has been used in compiling this historical record. We wish to express our sincere appreciation for the information supplied by various persons abroad.

This work is not only an account of the Arya Samaj movement abroad, as it also contains a brief survey of the ancient and modern links established by India with many parts of the world. Although mainly the religious activities of the Hindus abroad have been reflected, some reference has also been made to their educational, economic and political life.

A unity of purpose among the Hindus abroad seems to be highly desirable. Those who think of these people in the social context of India are perhaps not properly acquainted with the need, for the Hindus abroad, to work as an indivisible group on the basis of a common understanding. There is no place for sectarianism among them. It has also become a question of the preservation of Hinduism abroad and there is a need for continued vigilance in this regard. Those who are engaged in the work of the Arya Samaj are deeply conscious of this fact.

The circumstances that led to the settlement of Indians abroad and the life of these people today must be seen in the true historical perspective. Two chapters have been included with the specific purpose of providing such a background. An attempt has been made to give as succinctly as possible a true picture of the Indians living abroad. From the point of view of religion as well, there must be an objective appraisal of the life of the community if any success is to be achieved in the dissemination of the Vedic religion.

A great deal of historical evidence has come to light about the contacts that Indians had established with other countries even in ancient times. To those who are interested in the Hindu religion and culture, some insight into the historical past of India is indispensable. Such an investigation also makes the study of the Indians abroad more meaningful.

A chapter has been added to give a glimpse of the time when Indians were a seafaring nation. They not only traded with the neighbouring countries, but also shared with them the culture of a civilization that has been unique in the history of mankind. The two works used as the main sources of information in this chapter are "Hindu Culture in Greater India", by Swami Sadanand, and "The History of Indian Culture" (in Hindi), by Haridutt Vedalankar.

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Many aspects dealing with the religion, language and culture of the Hindus have been brought into focus. Particularly in matters of national significance, it has not been possible to isolate the Hindus from the rest of the Indian settlers. There is also a brief delineation of the work being done to keep the Hindi language alive abroad.

Various other facets of the life of the Indians abroad have also featured in this work. The religious preachers from India and others desirous of serving the Hindus in the foreign countries, will find useful information that will help them orientate their missions in a manner that will make their efforts more fruitful.

This is just a brief history of the Arya Samaj abroad. It is suggested that the religious institutions in every country where the Hindus have settled should compile a comprehensive history of their religious and cultural activities from the beginning of this century. There have also been many pioneers, preachers and well-wishers of the Arya Samaj in the countries abroad. Their efforts deserve to be given a place in the history of the movement. They were dedicated to the work of the Arya Samaj and upheld the prestige and glory of the Vedic religion and culture in the face of innumerable problems and vicissitudes. They served the cause of the Arya Samaj selflessly. A history containing such a record will inspire the generations of the future.

The year 1983 will mark the centenary of the **Nirvana** of Swami Dayanand Saraswati. The occasion could provide the Sarvadeshik Arya Pratinidhi Sabha with the opportunity to undertake the compilation of a more voluminous history of the Arya Samaj movement abroad.

The writers wish to express their sincere appreciation to Dr Satiadev Somera for having read the manuscript and for his advice. They are also very grateful to the Editor of "The Leader" for the assistance given by him during the course of the printing of this book.

Nardev Vedalankar
Manohar Somera

35 Cross Street
Durban 4001
South Africa.
5th October, 1975.

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PART I

CHAPTER I

INFLUENCE OF VEDIC CULTURE AND RELIGION IN ANCIENT TIMES

The influence of Vedic culture and religion goes back to ancient times, dating many centuries before the birth of Christ. The Aryan scholars of ancient India travelled to distant lands with the message of the Vedic religion and philosophy. All the known parts of the world at the time came under the influence of Vedic culture and civilization. The itinerant sannyasis and saints of India spread their influence in countries that were far beyond the mainland of India. The teachings of Agasthya, Vyasa and Manu did not remain within the boundaries of India alone, for the people of other countries were also influenced by them. The great Lawgiver, Manu, stated -

ETAD DESHA PRASUTASYA SAKASHADAGRA JANMANAH
SWAM SWAM CHARITRAM SHIKSHERAN PRITHIVYAM SARYA MANAVAH.
(Manusmriti, Chapter 2, Sloka 20)

(Tr. The learned persons of India shared the knowledge that they possessed with the peoples of many lands, thus enriching the culture and civilization of the latter.)

There is evidence to show that during the time of the Mahabharata there was some relationship between the Greeks and the Romans on the one hand and the Aryans on the other. There were links with the Middle East and vast areas of the Asian Continent. North and East Africa also had settlers of Indian origin. The Aryans had established contact with China and various places in the East Indies. The influence of the Aryans had spread to Iran, Turkstan and Afghanistan in the West and to Burma, Cambodia, Thailand, Java and Sumatra in the East.

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Indian sailing ships had developed the capacity of sailing across the vast, open seas and they were able to reach the shores of many foreign lands for the purpose of trade. India had commercial ties with several countries. The literature, art and sculpture of the neighbouring countries clearly show the influence of Indian culture and civilization. Even as far as the American coast, there is evidence of the ancient Indian culture in places such as Mexico, Surinam and the Caribbean Islands. It is quite a logical conclusion that the ancient Aryans had reached the American coast as well.

Owing to the vast distances involved and with navigation still being in its infancy, contacts with the distant, foreign lands were less frequent and, in fact, very rare. These contacts could have been even centuries apart and there was no continuity in the progress of ocean transport. The navigators of the ancient world could not have easily overcome the navigational hazards. But interest in shipping remained a compelling force among the Aryans.

During the reign of King Ashoka in India, about 250 B.C., there was a renewed interest to reach the neighbouring countries. He made a concerted effort to spread the influence of Buddhism. Besides going to countries such as Ceylon, Malaya, Burma and Cambodia, the Buddhist monks went beyond the Himalayas to Tibet, China and even Japan. They carried their message of love and goodwill as far as the Middle East. This period in Indian history is referred to as the age of Ashoka who was a renowned and illustrious king of India. He tried to conquer the forces of evil in order to establish a religious epoch. There is ample historical evidence of Buddhist sculpture in many countries outside India.

As some further evidence of the glorious, historical past of India will not be out of place, brief references will be made to certain countries.

IRAN

Certain groups of people that were of Aryan origin had settled in ancient Iran. It is highly probable that Iran was originally a country that was inhabited by the Aryan race. It is not difficult to infer that the name, Iran, could have been derived from the word, Aryan. Iran and Afghanistan once formed a part of the land that was occupied by the ancient Aryans. These adjoining countries came under the influence of Aryan culture and civilization. Prof. Max Müller has stated in his book, "Science of Language", as follows:

"But the word 'Arya' was more faithfully preserved by the Zoroastrians, who migrated from India to the North-West and whose religion has been preserved for us in the Zend Avesta, though in fragments only."

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Sir William Jones wrote: "I was not a little surprised to find that out of ten words in Du Perron's Zend Dictionary, six or seven were pure Sanskrit."

SRI LANKA (Ceylon)

The association of India with Sri Lanka dates back to the era of the Ramayana. It is a recognized fact in Indian history that in the sixth century B.C., Prince Vijay who belonged to a famous royal family of India, took control of Sri Lanka. Again in the third century B.C., King Ashoka sent his son, Mahendra, and his daughter, Sanghmitra, to disseminate the Buddhist religion among the people of Sri Lanka. The king of Sri Lanka, Thissa (247-207 B.C.), came under the influence of Ashoka and made Buddhism the national religion of his country. It was at this time that the Pali language, the Brahmi script and the Sanskrit alphabets appeared in Sri Lanka, while Indian art and sculpture also gained popularity there.

MIDDLE EAST

In the third century B.C. Indians had settled in many parts of the Middle East. Three historically famous travellers from China, namely, Fa-hien (fifth century A.D.), Huan-tsang (seventh century A.D.) and Itsing (seventh century A.D.) came to India. They disclosed in their tales that Indian influence had spread to Iraq, Syria and other countries in the Middle East. It has been stated that Buddhists resided in Turkstan where a Buddhist rule had been established.

CHINA AND JAPAN

During the reign of the Chinese king, Mingati (57 A.D.), two Buddhits mendicants, Kashyap Matanga and Dharmaratna, visited China. They translated several Sanskrit books into Chinese. The famous scholar and Buddhist monk, Kumarjiva, made Kucha his headquarters. In 383 A.D. he went to China where he was received with hospitality by the ruler of the country. While in China he translated ninety-eight Sanskrit books into Chinese. The Thangavansha period (618-907 A.D.) has been described as the golden age of Buddhism in China. It was at this time that Huan-tsang crossed the Himalayas from China and entered the famous University of Nalanda in India. On his return journey to China, he took six hundred and fifty-seven Sanskrit books with him from India. In the fifth century A.D. Buddhism reached Korea and Japan from China and it still has a strong influence there.

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MONGOLIA AND SIBERIA

By the seventh century A.D. Buddhism had reached Mongolia, Manchuria and Siberia. Dr Raghubir and his son, Dr Lokeshchandra, went to Siberia recently and carried out an extensive research to determine the influence of Buddhism in that country. In the sixth century A.D. the people of Mongolia were acquainted with the Sanskrit language. Six thousand Sanskrit books were translated in Mongolia into the local language. Dr Raghubir brought a number of these translations with him to India. Among these books were works such as **Maghduth** and **Kavyadarsh** of Kalidas; and also some of the works of the famous Sanskrit grammarian, Panini Muni.

Many Sanskrit words are found in the Mongolian language even today. At present Sambhu is the president of Mongolia; the flag of the country is called Sayambi (Swambhu); and the name of the wife of the vice-president is Indhri, while his mother's name is Ratna.

SOUTH-EAST ASIA

When a study is made of the countries of South-East Asia, namely, Thailand, Vietnam and Cambodia, the facts are most astonishing in relation to India. To the historian it seems that he is dealing with the culture and civilization of India. The people of these countries had imbibed a culture that was essentially Indian in character. In the early centuries the rulers of these countries were Hindus. But later Buddhism exerted its influence and displaced Hinduism.

In the work of Swami Sadanand, "Hindu Culture in Greater India", which is published by All India Arya (Hindu) Dharma Sewa Sangha, the influence of India in South-East Asia is described as follows:

> "Our cultural contact with the countries of South-East Asia, also called Greater India, was remarkable in many respects. From the first century of the Christian era onwards, bands of Hindu colonists spread east and south-east reaching Ceylon, Burma, Malaya, Java, Sumatra, Bali, Borneo, Siam, Cambodia and Indo-China. Some of them reached as far as the Philippine Islands. Even as far as Madagascar the influence of Hindus is still traceable in the language spoken there which has a good admixture of Sanskrit words in it. It must have taken them several hundred years to spread out in this way. But the most remarkable thing about the adventure of the Hindus was that they were mostly encouraged and organized by the Hindu rulers of the time. These colonies and settlements founded by the Hindus were situated, as a rule, on important trade routes and on those points which had strategic value."

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VIETNAM AND CAMBODIA

There were two Hindu kingdoms in Vietnam, namely, Champa and Annam. At first there was a kingdom called Funan. According to the Chinese historians Funan was a wild country and the people were mainly forest-dwellers. The foremost civilizing influence among these people was the introduction of the Vedic religion by a brahmin named Kaundinya in the first century A.D.

CAMBODIA

Cambodia (also known as Kamboja) was a Hindu kingdom for about one thousand and five hundred years. Yashovarma (889-908 A.D.) was a famous Hindu king of Cambodia. He was responsible for the introduction of a system of education among the people of Cambodia. The progress of the country during the reign of Suryavarma (1145 A.D.) was also remarkable. A magnificent Hindu temple was built in the district of Angkor in Cambodia. The place became noted as an important commercial centre. Writing about Angkor, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru stated, "Cambodia has become a famous country in South-East Asia. Angkor had its own beauty and splendour and it had a population of about a hundred thousand people. This town could be compared with Rome during the time of Caesar."

The ruins of this ancient city provide an interesting study of its past history. It seems paradoxical that, while the Mogul invaders were causing wanton destruction to the temples of India, Hindu temples of outstanding architecture were being constructed in South-East Asia.

Cambodia (Kamboja) is mentioned in the accounts of King Sagara in the original Ramayana of Valmiki. Swami Sadanand states that "in the Dwapara Yuga, at the time of the Mahabharata, the Aryans carried into distant Cambodia, within Greater India, their flag of conquest and along with it, Hindu civilization and culture." The names of various towns and localities in Cambodia are Sanskrit in origin, but are slightly changed in pronunciation. The art here is more or less like that of the Ajanta Caves.

THAILAND (Siam)

The population of the country is an intermixture of Indian, Chinese and Mongol Tibetans. The first independent king of Siam was Indraditya, a Thai chieftain. India's contact with Siam commenced at the dawn of the Christian era. There was a continuous flow of traders and colonists from India to the South Asian peninsula, comprising modern Burma, Siam, Indo-China and Malaya.

The word Siam is in origin, "Shyama", meaning "dark" in Sanskrit. Many Siamese names are Sanskrit in origin, such as, Prajadipak, Anand Mahidal and Siddhartha. The towns of Rajpuri and Ayodhya have Sanskrit names. The whole countryside of Siam is dotted with the ruins of ancient Indian architecture.

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The priests of Thailand perform religious ceremonies in accordance with prescribed rules. These priests are issued with certificates of proficiency and good conduct by the high priest of the country. They are selected on the basis of ability and there is no place for the system of hereditary priesthood. The Hindu religion had already existed in Siam for many centuries before Buddhism appeared on the scene. The sculpture of the Buddhist temples of Thailand reflects many stories of the Hindu epics, the Ramayana and the Mahabharata.

INDONESIA

In ancient times Indonesia was known as the land of gold. The country comprises three main islands, namely, Java, Sumatra and Bali. About the sixth century B.C. Indians from Madras had already reached these islands as tradesmen, soldiers and rulers. They apparently became the original inhabitants of these islands. Among the rulers in this part of the world, the Sailendra dynasty is famous in history for having brought all the islands in this region under its control.

In the fifteenth century A.D. the religion of Islam also reached Indonesia. The new conquerors of the Islamic faith brought to an end the Hindu religion that had already existed in the country.

Although Islam has become the religion of many of the Indonesian islands, the influence of Hindu culture persists most significantly. Dramas based on the Ramayana and the Mahabharata have become very popular in the cultural life of these people. The characters that have gained great popularity are Hanuman, Arjun and Bhim. Their great admiration of Rama and Krishna has become an inseparable part of the Indonesian culture. Swami Sadanand states that the sculpture on these islands provides no evidence of Lord Krishna who has a flute, or Krishna who is in the company of the milkmaids. It is also worth mentioning that among the Vaishnovites the three recognized puranas are the Harivansha, the Vishnu purana and the Bagavada. These puranas are also regarded as being the most ancient and in none of these is there any mention of Radha, the wife of Lord Krishna. Even the Mahabharata makes no mention of Radha. The consort of Krishna, Radha, became a feature of the puranas that appeared later.

President Soekarno of Indonesia once wrote to Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru that from the beginning of history India and its people are united by blood as well as culture with the Indonesians. India cannot be forgotten by them, even for a moment, because the introductory syllables of both India and Indonesia are the same. The letter was being written by President Soekarno from Jogajakarta (Yogyakarta), the Sanskrit origin of which is similar to that of Java and Sumatra. The name Soekarno itself is of Sanskrit origin. He reinforces his argument and declares his friendship by pointing out that a shipload of rice was leaving the port of Probolingo in Indonesia even at the time that he was writing the letter. The word "Probolingo" is derived from the

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Sanskrit roots, "purva" and "kalinga". This is also the same harbour where the first group of Indians set foot on the Indonesian soil. They were from Orissa and they seemed to have been on an expedition in search of barley (java). This is evidently the origin of the name, Java.

BALI

The Balinese believe that every Indian is a Hindu and is well-versed in Sanskrit. At a distance of three thousand miles from India, Bali is still a stronghold of Hinduism. All its inhabitants call themselves Hindus. They are of Indian descent. The four Vedas and the Gita are honoured by them as sacred and authoritative books just as in India. The Hindu tradition has been kept pure in Bali though it has been cut off from Hindu influence for at least six centuries. There are many Sanskrit scholars in Bali. Their brahmins are well-versed in Sanskrit.

JAVA

In the first century A.D. many Hindus migrated to Java and settled there for the purpose of trade and commerce. Javadwipa has been mentioned in the Kishkindha Kanda of Valmiki's Ramayana. In 423 A.D. Prince Gunavarman of Kashmir spread Buddhism in Java. From Java he went to China in a vessel that was owned by a Hindu named Nandi. Gradually Hindu kingdoms were established in Java and they lasted for several centuries. It became known as the Majapahit empire which maintained its greatness till 1376 A.D. when the Arab traders arrived. The militant Muslim religion succeeded in ousting Hinduism completely from Java where a Muslim kingdom was established.

Rama, Karna and Arjuna are still their national heroes and they often name their children after them. There are innumerable places in Java that bear names which are purely Sanskrit in origin. The Borobudur Temple is an edifice that stands today as a mark of the highest level of architectural perfection reached by a Hindu genius. "It is indeed one of the architectural masterpieces of the world." This temple was built by some king of the Sailendra dynasty of Srivijaya about 750 A.D. The ruins of Prambanan are the most famous of the historical relics of Java where both the Hindu and the Buddhist temples stood side by side. In the Middle Ages, the Hindu kings of Java worshipped both Siva and Buddha.

SUMATRA

In ancient times Sumatra was known as Suvarnadwipa. The original inhabitants of Sumatra are the Achines and the Bataks. The latter seem to have come into some form of contact with the Aryans. This is evident from a number of Sanskrit words like "guru" and "devata" and also from certain images of Hindu worship. The Minangkabaus were another tribe of the aborigines with a primitive form of spirit worship.

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The Aryans who came from all parts of India spread their intellectual, cultural and political influence in Sumatra. Swami Sadanand maintains that Sumatra was definitely mentioned in the Ramayana of Valmiki. It is surmised that this island came under the cultural sway of the Aryans at least in 1000 B.C. That the Hindus often embarked on ocean-borne enterprises may be substantiated by the Rigveda. It is certain that Hinduism held its own in Sumatra during the fifth century A.D. The Buddhist king, Balputradeva, ruled in Sumatra in the middle of the ninth century A.D.

MALAYA

According to Swami Sadanand Indian trading ships sailed across the Bay of Bengal to exchange beads, clothes and articles of dress for gold, ivory, camphor and other products of Malaya. Priests went to Malaya and taught the great religions, Hinduism and Buddhism, in Sanskrit. Gunavarman, a Kashmiri prince, visited Kedah in northern Malaya and Java in the fifth century A.D. He was able to convert many people to Hinayana Buddhism. For more than a thousand years Malaya was under Hindu influence and even after the advent of Islam much of the Hindu tradition has survived, especially at the courts, in medicine and in drama. The hill behind one Malay palace is still called the Mt. of Sri Indra. Such Sanskrit words as swami, swara, singasan and rupawan are still used in Malaya.

INFLUENCE OF INDIA IN THE WESTERN COUNTRIES

The influence of India had spread to the western countries many centuries before the birth of Christ. During the time of Alexander the Great the relationship between India and the West had become a reality of tremendous significance. India influenced western art, philosophy, mathematics, medicine and other fields of knowledge as well. Subsequently Buddhism also reached the West. The impact of Buddhism could be seen in the sculpture of many countries as far as Greece in the West.

Even during the Mogul period, Hindu culture continued to exert its own influence. Sufism in Islam was also influenced by Buddhism and the philosophy of Vedanta. In Bagdad the Yajurveda, mathematics, astrology and philosophy that emerged from India, were given adequate recognition. Several books were translated from Sanskrit into Arabic and the knowledge thus obtained was transmitted to the neighbouring western countries. The Arabic numerals have gained international importance. But in Arabia these numerals are referred to as "Hindasa" as a result of their Indian origin. The zero and the decimal quantities were first discovered by Indian Mathematicians before they became known in the western countries. These calculations were used in India in the pre-Christian era. About the sixth century A.D. this knowledge reached the Arabian countries. By the thirteenth century it gained currency in the western world.

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CHAPTER II

EMIGRATION OF INDIANS TO FOREIGN LANDS IN RECENT TIMES

The influence of ancient India on the outside world reflects a period of unparalleled glory in the history of India. Indian culture and civilization spread to countries far beyond the shores of India. In contrast to this, as an inexplicable paradox, Indians went abroad, in the recent past, to many parts of the world under a system of indenture to provide the supply of labour that was urgently needed. Although the Indian Government offered them the necessary protection, their servility rendered them easily susceptible to exploitation.

LETHARGY OF HINDUS

A period of decadence that had set in brought Hindu society in India to a state of deplorable disintegration. Illiteracy, adherence to meaningless rituals and bigotry became the order of the day. The Hindus were oblivious of the glorious past of India. They were emasculated in the face of the determined invaders. There was no religious or political leader to unite the whole country into a national force. India that had been recognized as the source of learning and philosophy, failed in the task of perpetuating literacy among its own people. Women and almost half the population that was occupied in menial work, were debarred from entering the portals of learning of which, in fact, there were too few, indeed.

The degenerating influence of the caste system took its toll and any hope of national unity was completely shattered. Hindu society became debilitated and fragmented. Even the present generation of the Indian masses have not yet found the strength to break away from the shackles that had destroyed the nationhood of India. The country that once gave rise to the great Aryan civilization and associated with others on the basis of universal brotherhood, failed to prevent its own social system from being undermined by the caste system that robbed vast masses of the people of human dignity.

Even in the partaking of meals social restrictions and reservations were created. The country could not produce an army that would stand shoulder to shoulder as a united people to protect the nation. The universality of the Hindu religion itself was destroyed and various religious cults appeared, each claiming its own inviolability. Polytheism was identified with Hinduism and worship became more ritualistic and tended to be primitive. Those who had descended from the Ar-

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yan race and had hailed as the followers of the Vedas and the Upanishads, had now lost the sense of direction in religion and social order, while forgetting the lessons of nationhood.

The practice of polygamy, child-marriage and the deprivation of social status of Hindu women were among the contributory factors that precipitated the decadence of Hindu society. The nationhood of India itself had suffered in this process of degeneration. Strangely enough, the Aryan race that went as educators, preachers and even traders to countries beyond the shores of India, now remained confined within the boundaries of the country. It became taboo for Indians to travel abroad. Transgression of this social code could not be prevented and it became obligatory for those who returned from an overseas trip to undergo prescribed ceremonies of purification.

In the sixteenth century the nations of Europe succeeded in establishing contact with India by sea. They arrived at the palace courts of the Mogul kings, Akbar and Jahangir. But it did not occur to the people of India that they could also have endeavoured to organize a fleet of ships to sail towards the west to the European countries. Indians who had established coastal towns, and even Sivaji, the great Indian hero, did realise that it was not an insuperable task to build a navy to compete with the western countries that were gradually gaining a foothold in India.

Even in this Twentieth Century such great Indian religious leaders of eminence as Lokmanya Tilak and Pandit Madan Mohanlall Malvya did not have the courage to oppose the purification ceremonies intended for those returning to India from abroad. This is a peculiar reflection on the attitude of the Pauranic Hindus. Such a narrow view on overseas travel had a deleterious effect on the progress of India.

In the nineteenth century Swami Dayanand declared the illogicality of continuing with such a practice. He condemned the partisanship and ignorance of the religious cults and upheld the authority of the Vedas as the only criterion on which religious judgments could be made. He persuaded Pandit Shyamji Krishna Varma to travel to Germany and England in order to study the science and technology of the western world.

INDIANS ABROAD TODAY

At a time when Indians had reached a very low level in their economic position in a country that had completely lost its freedom as a nation, many of them began to emigrate to sell their labour abroad. The demand for Indian labour arose as a result of the emancipation of slavery in 1834. Many western countries had already established colonies abroad. The discontinuation of slavery posed the question of suitable labour for the vast areas that were already under cultivation in the colonies that were established abroad. The local inhabitants and the slaves, particularly from Africa, who were now free, did not pro-

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vide the kind of labour that was required by the owners of the agricultural lands.

British rule in India had already begun and in order to assist the colonists they offered employment to Indians wishing to emigrate to the British colonies on the basis of a system of indentured labour. Thus by the end of the nineteenth century thousands of Indians went abroad to the new colonies, mainly as labourers, although some traders also followed later. The conditions under which the Indian immigrants worked in the colonies were akin to semi-slavery.

THE PLIGHT OF INDIAN LABOURERS ABROAD

It was not an easy task to attract Indians to work in foreign countries. The recruiting agents resorted to guile, deceit and the tales of fabulous prospects abroad. Those who offered their services had hardly any inkling of the struggle and hardship that lay in store for them. They were not given a clear picture of the type of work that they would have to do; and they were completely unaware of the conditions of service that would apply. Many of the recruits came from a group that was keen to escape from a variety of domestic problems; it is also possible that some of these young people regarded it as a sheer delight and an opportunity to seek adventure. The long hours of work, poor housing and the absence of amenities were the stark facts of an abhorrent situation.

As the great majority of these settlers belonged to the uneducated group in India, they lacked the ability to establish a strong social order. The caste system, superstition and bigotry were the other perplexing factors in the life of the new settlers. The mental agony of some of these people could be imagined when it is realised that they were bereft of family ties and in their daily work they generally had to reckon with unfriendly and tyrannous overseers, some of whom were fellow Indians who strutted vainglorioously and exuded wrath in their masters' garb

The system of indentured Indian labour first commenced in 1830. The first group of Indian labourers went to Mauritius, an island in the Indian ocean. Then there followed a mass exodus of workers who went in batches to many different countries. In the first quarter of the present century, objections had already been raised against the importation of Indian labour. On 25th May, 1917, the British Government enacted a law and decreed the termination of the system of indentured labour.

DESTINED TO SERVE IN MANY LANDS

The system of indentured labour took Indians in large numbers to the new colonies established in many parts of the world. Today their total number exceeds five million and they are mainly the descendants of the indentured Indians. They were recruited to serve as labourers

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on the sugar-cane plantations in Mauritius, Fiji, Natal (South Africa), Jamaica, Surinam and Guyana (South America). The new source of labour was welcome in the colonies abroad. They cleared the woodlands and tilled the soil. The cane-fields flourished wherever they were engaged as labourers.

Indians also went to Ceylon (Sri Lanka), Malaya, Singapore and Burma to work on the tea and rubber plantations. Some of the Indian labourers went as far as Canada and many went to places in East Africa, such as, Kenya, Uganda and Tanganyika (Tanzania). They were engaged in the clearing of forests and the construction of roads and railway lines. Many of them also worked in the coal mines. They endured the rain, heat and frost. Many risked their lives by being exposed to Malaria in the equatorial region of Africa. They changed the forests and grasslands into productive agricultural holdings.

On the expiry of their periods of indenture, which initially lasted from three to five years, many of the Indian immigrants were allowed to settle in these foreign countries. Some of them became market-gardeners and others sought employment as municipal workers. The mines and the railways offered new opportunities of employment. There were others who became small shopkeepers. With the passage of time schools were built and the new generation came under the influence of a western system of education. Today, after a hundred years abroad, the descendants of the indentured Indians have established themselves in agriculture, trade, commerce and the professions. They have become fully integrated in the economic life of their countries of adoption. The advancement of some of the people has been most remarkable. They have become industrialists, large landowners and traders. In the professions we find professors, doctors, lawyers and teachers. Many of them have established themselves in the transport business, owning fleets of buses and other transport vehicles. Indian contractors undertake the construction of multi-storeyed buildings. Such has been the change in fortune from very humble beginnings, although the economy of all the countries where Indians have settled is not expected to be the same.

CATEGORIES OF INDIANS ABROAD

They could be classified into four groups. The vast majority of them belong to the indentured group of Indians who settled in Mauritius, Fiji, Natal (South Africa), Trinidad, Surinam, Jamaica, Guyana, Ceylon, Malaya and Burma. Most of them belong to the Hindi and Tamil-speaking groups. There are some Telegus and Punjabis among them as well.

The agriculturalists and artisans could be placed in the second category. They were engaged mainly as workers in the construction of roads and railways, in the mines and in the clearing of forest lands. The Indians in this category went to Canada, California, Burma, Mal-

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INDIANS ABROAD - FACTS AND FIGURES

Country	No. of Immigrant Indians (1974)	Per-centage	Year of First Immigra-tion	Indian Language Groups
Fiji	241 000	51%	1879	H, T, G, U
Burma	272 000	-	1890	T, H, G, B, Te, P, S
Malaysia	950 000	-	-	T, H, G, B, Te, P, U
Singapore	130 000	7,5%	1819	T, H, G, Te, S, P, U
Sri Lanka	1 200 000	-	1839	T, Te, G, S
Mauritius	551 000	67%	1834	H, U, T, Te, M
Reunion	200 000	-	1830	T, Te
South Africa	620 000	2,5%	1860	T, H, Te, U, G
Kenya	40 000	-	1895	G, H, P, U
Tanganyika	20 000	-	1895	G, H, P, U
Mozambique	8 000	-	-	G, U
Zambia	11 500	-	-	G, U
Rhodesia	9 500	-	-	G, U
Trinidad	480 000	40%	1845	H, U
Guyana	390 000	52%	1844	H, U
Surinam	142 000	37	1873	H, U
Jamaica	50 000	2	1844	H
Granada (WI)	9 500	-	1844	H
West Indies	10 000	-	1844	H (Many Islands)
Canada	20 000	-	1904	P.H.G

Notes:

1. Where the Indian population is less than one per cent it has not been recorded.
2. The first place is given to the predominant language group in the country.
3. Symbols: H - Hindi, T - Tamil, G - Gujerati, P - Punjabi, B - Bengali, U - Urdu, Te - Telegu, S - Sindhi, M - Mahrati.

The Indian population in other countries are as follows:

Thailand - 18 000 (H,P,S); Indonesia - 20 000 (P,S,B); Hong Kong - 8 000 (P,S,G); Philippines - 2 500 (P,S); Australia - 3 100 (G, U); New Zealand - 6 000 (G,U); Vietnam - 2 000 (S.P); Afghanistan - 20 000; Kuwait - 20 000 (P,S,H,U); Madagascar - 36 000 (T,G,U,P); Middle East - 10 000; England - 20 000 (M,P,G,U); America - 32 000 (H,P,G,U); Venezuela - 5 000 (H,S,U); Germany - 4 000; Ethiopia - 4 500 (G,S,U); Nigeria - 3 500; Sudan - 2 000 (G,H); Zaire - 2 500 (G,U); Arab Countries - 5 000. There were many thousands of Indians in Uganda and Zanzibar but now only a few families are left behind after their mass exodus for political reasons.

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aya and East Africa. Punjabi Hindus and Sikhs were predominant in this group.

The traders belonged to the third group of Indians who arrived as settlers in the new colonies. The Gujeratis, Sindhis, Khojas and Memons comprised this category of Indians. Many of them emigrated from India to South and East Africa, Singapore, Hong Kong, Thailand and Fiji.

The people who are emigrating from India today belong to the fourth group of Indian settlers abroad. In the past thirty to forty years thousands of Indians left India to settle in foreign countries. They belong to the highly literate group of Indians, particularly from the urban areas. But not many of them have become naturalized citizens of other countries. In this group we find students, teachers, doctors, engineers, artists, scientists, diplomats and ambassadors. Non-professional Indians have also settled abroad, particularly in England. Some own restaurants, while others are employed in the post offices and in the transport services. They have found congenial avenues of employment.

Indians from many walks of life have settled abroad. Their number today could be estimated to be about six million.

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CHAPTER III

THE CONDITION OF INDIANS LIVING ABROAD

A brief survey is being given to indicate the present position of the Indians living abroad. It is important to get a glimpse of the existing situation for a proper historical perspective.

SOUTH-EAST ASIA AND THE PACIFIC ISLANDS

FIJI

Fiji comprises a group of small islands in the Pacific Ocean. The indigenous people were very small in number. In 1879 the European landowners introduced Indian indentured labour in Fiji for the purpose of agriculture. Today among those who are of Indian origin the Hindi-speaking group forms the majority. The others are Tamil and Telegu-speaking. There are also some Gujerati, Muslim and Punjabi traders. The Fijian nation comprises Indians, Chinese, Europeans and those who are of a mixed-race group.

The Fiji Islands were annexed by the British in 1874. The total population is about three hundred and seventy-five thousand. In 1973 fifty-one per cent of them were people of Indian origin. The Hindi language is officially recognized and its use is permitted in the governing councils of the country. Fiji is sometimes called the minor India of the Pacific Ocean. The Indians have become an integral part of the population and they enjoy all the political rights and privileges.

BURMA

Burma is in the geographical neighbourhood of India. Its cultural link with India goes back to the ancient past. At first Hinduism was the religion of Burma, but later, during the rule of Anarodh, Buddhism became the recognized religion of the country. In 1856 British rule was extended to Burma. In 1890 the British Government took about twenty-two thousand peasants from Bihar in India and allowed them to settle in Burma for the purpose of agriculture. They cleared the forests and made vast areas available for cultivation. Later these people moved to the towns and villages.

Before the Second World War the Indian population in Burma had reached over a million. The ravages of war also affected their lives and property and many thousands of them returned to India completely bereft of their possessions. Thus the Indian population in Burma has been reduced to about a quarter million. The majority of them are Tamil-speaking, while the others belong to the Hindi, Telegu, Ben-

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gali, Gujerati and the Urdu language groups.

Indians are found in all walks of life in Burma. They are farmers, traders, teachers, office clerks, artisans and semi-skilled workers. Burma gained its independence in 1948 amidst a wave of nationalism and the Indian settlers were regarded as foreigners. At this time of political transition, Indians suffered many hardships, with the result that a great number of them surrendered their possessions and returned to India. Those that remained in Burma were denied the right of citizenship and they encountered many economic and political problems.

MALAYSIA

After the thirteenth century A.D. Hinduism began to give way to Islam which became the dominant religion in Malaysia. Western influence became established in the country in the nineteenth century. Indians were recruited to serve as labourers on the rubber plantations and in the tin mines. The other Indians who also migrated to Malaysia were tradesmen, officials in the service of the government and doctors. About ninety per cent of the Indian settlers are from South India. The others belong to the Hindi, Punjabi, Sindhi and the Bengali language groups. The population of Indians in Malaysia has now reached almost a million. The only other foreign country with a greater number of Indians is Ceylon. The Indian settlers have now been accorded the right of citizenship.

SINGAPORE

Indian immigration to Singapore commenced in 1819. The majority of the Indians are Tamil-speaking. Tamil is a language recognized by the Government of the country. The other Indians belong to the Hindi, Telegu, Gujerati, Punjabi and the Sindhi language groups. They participate fully in the economic life of the country. Many of them are successful tradesmen. All the Indians are now fully-fledged citizens of the country.

SRI LANKA

Sri Lanka is an independent state in the neighbourhood of India. There has always existed a close contact between Sri Lanka and India. In 1839, during the British rule in Ceylon, Indians were taken to work on the tea plantations in the country. The majority of them were Tamil-speaking. There were also Gujeratis, Sindhis and Memons.

When Britain granted Sri Lanka its independence, a wave of nationalism swept through the country and the Indian settlers who had contributed to the economic progress of the country were treated as undesirable foreigners. They could not become citizens of the country and they have no security. The Asians who are still in Sri Lanka now face a bleak future.

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MAURITIUS

The French occupation of Mauritius commenced in 1715. It came under British control in 1810. The European settlers found the place suitable for the cultivation of sugar-cane. Negroes from East Africa and Chinese were introduced as labourers on the plantations but the farmers were not pleased with them. It was at this juncture in 1834 that indentured Indian labour came to the rescue of the sugar industry in Mauritius. Their arrival gave a tremendous boost to this industry and Mauritius became a world-famous supplier of sugar.

About sixty-seven per cent of the population of Mauritius today are Indians. They have played a significant role in the struggle for independence. In 1968 Britain handed over the control of the Government to the people of Mauritius. Indians are in the majority in the Government. They have learnt to work in co-operation with the other race groups. Although the Indian settlers have now become Mauritian citizens they have still maintained their cultural links with India. Mauritius could be regarded as "little India" in the Indian Ocean.

REUNION

Reunion is a small island under French rule at a distance of about two hundred miles from Mauritius. Indians went to Mauritius as indentured labourers in 1830. They were mainly from South India. At present the Indian population in the country is about two hundred thousand and they are in the majority. They have embraced Christianity and the Indian languages are completely forgotten.

SOUTH AFRICA

The advent of Europeans in South Africa commenced over three hundred years ago. The Bantu races who hailed from the north also laid claim to many parts of the country. The four Provinces, namely, the Cape, the Orange Free State, the Transvaal and Natal formed the Union of South Africa which was established in 1910 as a part of the British Commonwealth. In 1961 the country gained its independence and became the Republic of South Africa under a White government. The Afrikaner settlers, who form the majority party in the Government, are mainly of Dutch origin. English and Afrikaans are the two official languages of the country.

Indian immigrants came to South Africa in 1860 under the system of indenture and settled in Natal. Although the majority of them are Tamil and Hindi-speaking there are also others belonging to the Telegu, Gujerati and Urdu-speaking groups. The Gujerati-speaking Hindus and Muslims arrived in South Africa as free Indians and they formed the core of the Indian traders in the country. Mahatma Gandhi campaigned in South Africa to free the Indians from some of the restrictive laws. It was here also that he realised the efficacy of Sa-

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tyagraha as a political weapon. Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi who created a stir in the political life of South Africa later became world renowned as Mahatma Gandhi, one of the greatest political figures of modern India.

The Indian population of South Africa is six hundred and twenty thousand. Many of them who now own freehold farmlands are engaged in agriculture. Some of them own factories and many of them are traders. There are professors, doctors, lawyers, lecturers and teachers who comprise the professional group in the Indian community. The Indians have become fully integrated in the economic life of the country. They are advanced educationally and their economic position has also progressed rapidly. The policy of the Government provides for the separate development of the different race groups. Indians and Coloureds form separate entities. The overall control of the country is in the hands of Whites.

EAST AFRICA (Kenya, Uganda and Tanganyika)

Indian contact with the east coast of Africa dates back to the pre-Christian era. The influx of Indians, mainly as traders, to the various centres in East Africa commenced about 1890. There were others who came to work as labourers in the construction of roads and railways, and in the clearing of forests for the purpose of agriculture. They were exposed to the dangers of malaria and the wild animals that roamed the forests. It is clearly evident that Indians contributed to agriculture, trade and the general economic progress of East Africa.

As from 1961 the European governments in East Africa began to relinquish their control in favour of the indigenous nations. It seems that the spirit of nationalism had spread from India to the Continent of Africa. Indians in East Africa had become well-established and a prosperous community. They became a strong influence in the economic life of East Africa and this contributed to the well-being of the people living in the various territories.

The upsurge of nationalism in the newly independent countries engendered a feeling of antagonism towards the Indian settlers. In place of harmony and co-operation, some of the laws that were enacted showed a complete disregard of the rights of the Indians. Those who were unfortunate not to be citizens of these independent countries, were compelled to leave, invariably in a state of complete economic ruin. Even those who were naturalized citizens found the emergence of a racial prejudice most unpleasant. The plight of the Indians in Zanzibar and Uganda has become a regrettable chapter of racial intolerance in Africa. Most of them were completely dispossessed. The figures given below indicate the reduction of the Indian population in the territories of East Africa.

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Country	1961	1974
Kenya	175 000	40 000
Uganda	73 000	(Just a few families)
Tanganyika	60 000	20 000
Zanzibar	15 000	(Just a few families)

As citizens of the British Commonwealth, many families sought refuge in Britian. Unfortunately, Great Britain restricted the number of families that could settle there each year, with the result that the process of emigration from these territories became slow and agonising to the Indians who faced uncertainty and insecurity. Some of them were allowed to settle in Europe and also in America. Many of the Indians who are still in these territories are doubtful of their future. But it is not likely that all the Indians will leave East Africa.

MOZAMBIQUE

Mozambique had been under the rule of the Portuguese for many centuries. Both Gujerati Hindus and Muslims from India arrived in Mozambique in large numbers at the beginning of this century. They became well-established mainly as traders. When Goa was occupied by India in 1962, the Portuguese authorities in Mozambique retaliated by expelling thousands of Indians from the territory. But about eight thousand Indians are still in Mozambique. In 1975 the country was granted its independence by Portugal and a socialist system of government has come into being. It is possible that better relations may now be established, but the recent change in government makes the position of Indians in the country most insecure.

RHODESIA

At the beginning of this century Indians settled in Rhodesia as traders and workers. They are mainly Gujeratis and their number is about a thousand at present. As the political problems of the country have not yet been solved, the future position of the Indian settlers is not certain.

ZAMBIA AND MALAWI

Both these countries have been granted independence by Britain. Indians have settled as traders and workers in Zambia and Malawi. There is a good relationship between these two countries and India which has provided them, as developing countries, with teachers and technical advisers. The Indian settlers who number about twelve thousand are predominantly Gujeratis whose economic position is sound. But they are also experiencing the adverse effects of the changing political scene in Southern Africa.

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MALAGASY REPUBLIC (Madagascar)

Indians have also settled here as traders and workers for a long time. During the French rule some Indian labourers were brought to the country. The Indian population at present is about sixteen thousand. The country has now become independent. This political change does not augur well for the Indian settlers.

In Ethiopia and Sudan about three thousand Indians have been accepted as doctors, engineers, teachers and businessmen. The present climate of political change has made the position of Indians look uncertain.

THE WEST INDIES AND SOUTH AMERICA

In the first half of the nineteenth century, the system of indentured labour from India was also introduced in the West Indies and certain parts of South America. They have contributed to the economic progress of the West Indies where they have been accepted as citizens.

GUYANA

European settlers had reached the north-eastern part of South America about three hundred years ago. The three separate areas that were established were British Guyana, Dutch Guyana and French Guyana. In order to build up the economy of the country Negro slaves from the western coast of Africa were introduced in these places. But the abolition of slavery in 1833 brought about a new situation. Chinese labour was tried at this stage but the venture did not meet with success. In 1844 British Guyana (now just Guyana) introduced indentured Indian labourers in this country in the western hemisphere. The immigrants were mainly Hindi-speaking.

Today there are about four hundred thousand persons of Indian origin in Guyana and they comprise fifty-two per cent of the population. The Negroes are about thirty-three per cent of the population and the Europeans make up the remaining fifteen per cent. The Red Indians who were the original inhabitants of the place have now grown insignificant in number.

When the country gained its independence, power went into the hands of the Negroes. Despite their large population the say of the Indians in the government of the country is restricted. They also have to endure certain prejudices, but they have become fully integrated in the economic life of the country and have also made considerable progress. It is hoped that in the course of time they will be accorded all the rights of a free and independent country.

SURINAM (Dutch Guyana)

The original settlement of Indians in Surinam followed the same pattern as that of British Guyana. They arrived in Surinam in 1873 as

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labourers on the sugar-cane plantations. After the expiry of the period of contract, they decided to remain in the country, although there were some who returned to India. Today the Indian settlers comprise about thirty-seven per cent of the total population of four hundred thousand. Only three per cent of them are Red Indians who were the original inhabitants. During the Dutch rule some Japanese immigrants were also brought to Surinam. The Indian settlers are content with their position in the country.

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TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

Trinidad and Tobago are a part of the Caribbean Islands and they are unified under a single government. Before Indian labour was introduced in 1845, the country had depended on the Negro slaves to work on the sugar-cane plantation. Today there are four hundred and eighty thousand Indians in the country and they comprise about forty per cent of the population. In the West Indies, Trinidad has the largest Indian population. They are to be found in all walks of life in the country and they have made considerable progress. Although they form a major part of the population they do not yet enjoy full political rights.

JAMAICA

This is another island in the West Indies where Indian labour was introduced on the sugar-cane plantations. The Indian population of Jamaica is about fifty thousand which is just two per cent of the total population. They belong mainly to the Hindi-speaking group but the language is not spoken any more as they have become completely western in outlook.

GRANADA, ST. VINCENT AND ST. LUCIA

Indian labour was introduced on these islands of the West Indies in 1858. Today they number about ten thousand and they have become foreign to Indian culture. In the state of Venezuela in South America there are about six thousand Indians. They emigrated from the neighbouring countries. Some of them are traders.

IMMIGRANT INDIANS IN OTHER PARTS OF THE WORLD

CANADA

Indian immigration in Canada began in 1904. They provided the labour requirement for the clearing of forests and the construction of railways, roads and bridges. They have settled mainly in western Canada. The chief centres of Indian population are British Columbia, Vancouver and Toronto. A great number of the Punjabi Sikhs among them are engaged in the timber industry. The Indian population of Canada today is about twenty thousand. Most of them are now advanced educationally. There are many Indian doctors, engineers, lawyers, teachers and clerical workers who still retain their Indian nationality.

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AMERICA

There are about fifty thousand Indians in the United States of America today. They are mainly students and lecturers. Most of them are in California and other cities on the west coast of America. Among them there are also Punjabi, Sindhi and Gujerati businessmen.

ENGLAND

The link between India and England goes back to two hundred and fifty years. During the British rule in India, Indians travelled to England for various purposes and this became an established feature. In recent years many Indians have gone to England in search of employment. There are also doctors, teachers and technicians among them. The Indians with British passports sought refuge in Britain when they were expelled from East Africa. The vast majority of the Indians who are in England today are Punjabis, Sindhis, Gujeratis, Bengalis and Sikhs. The British Government has now introduced stricter control on Indian immigration.

Indians have also settled in other parts of Europe. In western Germany there are about eight thousand Indians. About six thousand Indians are in New Zealand and three thousand in Australia. The majority of them are Gujeratis and Sindhis.

AFGHANISTAN

Afghanistan was actually a part of India in ancient times. At present about twenty thousand Hindus are living there. They are the descendants of the original Hindu settlers in Afghanistan. In their way of life they are fully integrated with the rest of the population. But they have still remained adherents of the Hindu religion and culture.

THE MIDDLE EAST

In the Middle East the number of Indian settlers had reached about fifty thousand in recent years. They were to be located mainly in Iraq, Kuwait, Amman, Aden, Muscat, Bahrain and in many other places. They were engaged in business and many were in government employment. But most of them have now moved out of the Middle East. Those who are still there are the government advisers, architects, doctors and others whose services are required. They number several thousand, but it is not possible for them to settle there permanently.

Some Indians have also settled in West and North Africa. They have identified themselves with the peoples of these countries.

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CHAPTER IV

SOME PROBLEMS OF INDIANS LIVING ABROAD

Indians have now been living abroad in various parts of the world for the past hundred to a hundred and fifty years. Their problems which have been numerous, have not been identical in the different countries. Some of the common problems could be isolated and studied in the context of the local situation. These problems could be classified into two categories, namely, the right of citizenship, political rights, economic problems and relationship with the rest of the population; and the problems encountered in the preservation of the Indian's religion, language and culture.

RIGHT OF CITIZENSHIP

The right of citizenship of the Indians that have settled abroad, has become a momentous issue in many places. The vast majority went abroad to the European colonies as immigrant labourers. With the end of colonialism there dawned the spirit of nationalism in the countries that had been under the yoke of foreign powers and had just gained their independence. National consciousness is found throughout the emergent countries of the world and it has become a force that cannot easily be allayed by means of palliatives. The colonial powers have already found it expedient to relinquish their control in many of the erstwhile colonies. Most of the European settlers were able to return very conveniently to the countries from which they hailed. But the Indians and their descendants in the colonies were left to fend for themselves and, in many cases, with tremendous odds arrayed against them.

Whenever a person settles in a foreign country, he does not necessarily sever his ties with the country of his origin. But full citizenship of a country becomes the inalienable right of all immigrants and their descendants who have been lawfully permitted to settle in a foreign country. In normal circumstances, the immigrant settlers become fully integrated with all facets of the life of a country. They also develop social ties with the other nationalities of a country. In fact they adapt themselves to the social pattern of the country.

The Indian immigrants gradually became accustomed to the social and political conditions in the countries of their adoption. They have completely surrendered their relationship with India. Particularly those Indians who went abroad as labourers grasped the opportunities that they found of settling in the countries where they had already

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toiled under difficult conditions for many years. For economic reasons it was not possible in those early days for these Indian immigrants to retain their contact with India by means of regular travels. They also had to take cognizance of the fact that they could not easily reunite with their families in India, for by leaving the shores of India, they had apparently broken a social order. The rigidity of the caste system in India and other social taboos were well-known to these people. Today the Indians have reached the third and fourth generations in the countries abroad. To the new generation, India has become a foreign land and they are Indians in name only.

Another group that went abroad from India were the free Indians who belonged mainly to the trading class. It did not take them long to establish themselves in the new colonies. But they were able to retain their links with India by means of occasional and even regular travels. They are also in the second and third generations today. It is not now customary for them to travel to India for marriage and many have in fact become complete strangers to India.

The indentured group of Indians were the first to become entitled to the right of citizenship. The withholding of such a right from them constitutes the denial of a basic human right. The descendants of the free Indians have also become citizens of various countries. The older generation, however, persisted in retaining their Indian nationality. They were conscious of their family ties in India and they feared that by surrendering their right of Indian nationality they would be deprived of the sense of security that they enjoyed.

The wave of nationalism that has swept through many countries has become a grim reminder of the folly of those Indians who had hesitated or failed to accept the right of full citizenship of the countries in which they had hoped to reside permanently. The sad plight of the Indians that were expelled from East Africa is a tragic chapter in the life of Indians abroad. In 1962 when Goa was occupied by the Indian army, Indians who had settled in Mozambique were compelled to leave. More recently it was horrifying to witness the mass exodus of Indians from Zanzibar and Uganda. They had contributed to the economy of these countries but they were deprived of all their possessions at the time of their forced departure. The Indians in Keyna, Rhodesia and Zambia are also living in a state of uncertainty. They have been accorded the right of citizenship in these countries. But there is no assurance that a future change in government will not give rise to a policy that would deprive Indians of their rights and privileges.

The position of Indians today in Burma and Sri Lanka involves many hardships. They are not entitled to the right of citizenship and their repatriation has become the official policy. In the meantime they are undergoing a period of political and economic attrition. Excluding

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Ceylon and Malaysia, South Africa has the largest Indian population abroad. The combined total of Indians in the different territories of East Africa is also far less. But the Indians form a very small minority group in South Africa when compared with the rest of the population. In 1961 the policy of repatriation was abandoned and Indians were recognized as citizens of the country by an Act of Parliament.

The White Government of the Republic of South Africa has, for the past twenty-five years, adopted a policy of separate development for the Whites, Coloureds, Indians and the Bantus who comprise the indigenous population. The number of Indians in Rhodesia is very small and their political future is still not clear.

Amidst the wave of nationalism that overtook the independent states of Africa, the Indian settlers found themselves in a state of utter helplessness. At this stage it must be noted that Indian immigration in the first half of the nineteenth century was a system introduced by the colonial powers for the purpose of providing some of the countries abroad with an urgently needed supply of labour. The Indian traders also went to these places and established shops, mainly to serve the Indian settlers. But they extended their services to the other population groups as well. It was the reliability of Indian labour that made them very popular among the European landowners. It must be noted that the subsistence of the people of India was based on agriculture and the vast population of the country had become accustomed to tilling the soil. Thus they were able to provide the type of labour that was required in the new colonies. Over the past hundred years and more it has become an incontrovertible fact that Indians contributed to the economic progress of the countries abroad where they settled.

Now to return to the African continent, it is appreciated that the indigenous people have every right to benefit from unhindered progress. But it was essential for any change that was intended to influence the life of other people in these countries to be more gradual and it would not have been difficult for the new generation of Indians to adapt themselves to the changing political and economic conditions.

In many other parts of the world, the Indian settlers have not yet fully solved the problems relating to their future. In Mauritius, Fiji and Guyana Indians are in the majority. The total number of the indigenous people in these countries is insignificant. All the settlers are mainly foreigners. In Guyana, for instance, there are Negroes, Chinese and Europeans. Therefore to regard the Indians as foreigners deserving to be restricted in any way, is puerile. Although about fifty-two per cent of the population in Guyana are Indians, political manoeuverings have kept them deprived of full political rights. In Trinidad and Surinam the Indians comprise forty and thirty-seven per cent respectively of the population in the two countries. As a racial group in

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each of these countries, the Indians are in the majority. In Singapore about seven per cent of the population are Indians. In all these countries the Indian settlers are living in harmony with the rest of the people.

All the Indian settlers are loyal to the countries to which they belong. They have demonstrated their readiness to contribute to all aspects of national defence and they have shown an equal interest with the rest of the population in the problems besetting the nation in each of these countries. The thriving economy of many countries abroad have been the result of the sweat and toil of the Indians in the days of indentured labour. They regard the countries where they have settled as their own. In the circumstances it is a matter for great regret that in some places they are still being treated with suspicion and as foreigners. This situation is the direct result of the selfish motives of those who are in a position to exercise power.

Whether these people belong to the group of exploiters or the exploited, is not relevant to the issue. Such a question could be posed to groups belonging to other nationalities as well in many parts of the world. Indians do not wish to adopt a "holier than thou" attitude, but they have not been lacking in charity and a feeling of sympathy for the less privileged, where they themselves have not been the victims. For them to be treated with prejudice for their political views, or their party-political affiliations, is a violation of the principle of democracy. They have the right to react to political issues as individuals. Their allegiance to political parties is also subject to the exigencies of the time. The change of power from one political party to another is a normal democratic procedure. In countries verging on dictatorship the mutual hatred among the political groups seeking power often gives rise to internecine violence. Zanzibar, Uganda, the Congo, Nigeria, Rwanda, Burundi and Angola are recent examples of such upheavals in Africa. In situations of political rivalry, the Indians who happen to belong to these countries, are confused and perplexed about the correctness of their political affiliations. The alternative of neutrality remains the only choice of a minority whose own future is at stake.

It has become the declared policy of the Government of India that it is incumbent on all persons of Indian origin to regard themselves as an indivisible part of the political and economic life of the country where they have settled. The Indian settlers are not unmindful of their political role. Even those who have been accepted as citizens are not being accorded the rights and privileges to which they are entitled. In such a context, the obduracy of India to mediate on behalf of the Indians in order to ameliorate their position and to secure a reliable future for them, seems to be incomprehensible.

There are many political disabilities that are still limiting the freedom and progress of the Indians that have settled abroad. But it has

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not been possible for India to exert any influence in their favour because its policy relating to Indians abroad is non-committal. It is regrettable that India does not raise its voice when persons of Indian origin abroad become the victims of the changing political situations in the emergent countries. These Indians cannot help being dismayed for their only hope is to resign themselves to Providence as unprotected minorities.

ECONOMIC POSITION

When the economic conditions prevailing in the countries where Indians have settled are scrutinized, it becomes apparent that, from the early days of colonialism, the European settlers occupied positions of great affluence. The vast majority of Indians went abroad under the system of indenture, and in the course of time they shared the economic prosperity of the countries where they had settled. But the Indians who went as traders had a decided economic advantage over the indentured group of Indians. The indigenous population, as in Southern Africa, remained at a lower economic level.

The political independence of the emergent states must be seen against this economic background. The colonial powers were able to guarantee the safety of the life and property of their nationals. In times of distress the European settlers disposed of their properties and moved out with their families under the protection of their governments. Evacuation by air was readily available if the circumstances demanded.

In such countries of political turbulence, the Indians who had already become a progressive community, were at the mercy of the forces seeking to dispossess all foreigners of their possessions. As a result of the unbridled emotions at times of political crises, the newly independent nations had become irrational and were not in a mood to give sufficient thought to the fact that the vast majority of the Indian immigrants had arrived under the system of indentured labour. It was by sheer perseverance and toil that many of them had progressed economically, although a small group among the Indian settlers had been traders from the outset.

Originally the Indian immigrants worked on the vast areas of land owned by the European settlers. They were willing to travel thousands of miles from their homes in India to undertake the tasks that involved tremendous physical exertion in the most trying circumstances of climate and under severe conditions of service. There were many taskmasters among the overseers. Strangely enough the Indians excelled in the type of work in which they were engaged mainly on the sugarcane plantations. They displayed the ability and eagerness to learn all that they were expected to do. Many of them were craftsmen of great merit. Although they did not belong to the educated group of Indians,

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they prized literacy highly and tried to provide the facilities for the educational advancement of their children. As workers they were extremely reliable and in positions of responsibility they could be trusted, with the result that the employers of Indians were just as much pleased with them in the early days as they are today.

Perhaps the Indian settlers possessed one remarkable quality and that was their dedication to the task that earned them a livelihood. In a foreign land the first lesson they learnt was to be thrifty and they avoided extravagance. They were conscious of the importance of financial security and they also realised that the fulfilment of parental duties was dependent on the financial resources of the parents. These were the sterling qualities that contributed to the economic progress of the Indians.

Wherever there are signs of economic prosperity among Indians, it must be noted that their acquisitions have been hard-earned. In the first fifty years as settlers abroad, the Indians have had to endure many hardships and difficulties. The laws of many countries restricted them both economically and politically. The European who had already established themselves as traders, saw in the Indians a new threat as competitors, and took measures against them. But on the basis of the quality already enumerated, combined with perseverance, the economic progress of the Indians has become very clearly evident over the past century. Their educational advancement is unique; in commerce they have shown a degree of excellence; and they accepted the challenge of many vocations and proved that they had the ability to satisfy the standards required for success. But the account just given will be distorted unless it is pointed out that the economic position of a vast majority of the Indians is still low. The reasons for the economic handicaps of the indigenous people cannot be explained easily as various socio-economic factors are involved.

CONTRIBUTION OF INDIANS

Indians have contributed in various ways towards the progress of the countries where they have settled. The more fortunate among them have always been generous and charitable towards the less fortunate ones in their own community and also towards the indigenous people whenever the occasion demanded.

While the colonial system took concepts of western civilization to many parts of the world, they had definitely created a new dimension in the lives of the indigenous people in these places. Industrialisation followed close on the heels of an agricultural economy that was first established in the new colonies. Except for the work of the missionaries, the colonial powers were not altogether interested in the educational and economic advancement of indigenous people. The European settlers established a way of life based on a western system of

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government. Such governments were intended for the progress and security of the White settlers, not of course forgetting the centres of authority in Europe. The chief Colonial powers were Spain, Portugal, France, England and Holland.

Today with the emergence of the new, independent nations, particularly on the African continent, a realisation has dawned among those who are in authority, that there is a tremendous backlog that has to be met in order to improve the educational and economic standard of life in these countries. These people have also come under the influence of political ideologies that are quite foreign to their way of life.

In the field of education particularly, the Indian settlers did not depend on the state to make all the provision. They resorted to self-help and made personal sacrifices to ensure that their children were not deprived of education. Wherever Indians have settled, there is ample evidence of the schools and colleges that they have built. They established health clinics, orphanages and old-age homes. Such projects have been financed by the Indian settlers in proportion to their means. The willingness to contribute portions of their hard-earned money for the benefit of the community is a very significant aspect of the life of Indians abroad.

In addition the Indian settlers had to shoulder the responsibility of making provision for the teaching of the mother-tongue; temples and other places of worship had to be built; and arrangements had to be made for religious and cultural publications. The thrifty habits of the Indians were chiefly responsible for the success of the various community projects and activities that were dependent on self-help. Fiji and South Africa could be cited as examples of the countries where primary education for the vast majority of the Indian children was made possible as a result of the numerous schools that were built by the Indians themselves. Up to 1960 the Indian community of South Africa contributed most generously towards the building of schools on the basis of a fifty-percent refund of the expenditure, by the authorities controlling education. Hospital wards and orphanages have been built as a result of Indian philanthropy.

In the city of Durban in South Africa, the M.L. Sultan Technical College was established when a very substantial donation was offered. The College bears the name of the donor. The M.L. Sultan Trust donated a total of one hundred and fifty thousand rand (one and a half million Rupees) towards the College which provides specialised technical and commercial training to the vast Indian population of Durban. The Indian community also contributed a very substantial amount towards the College. An extension of the College was made recently at a cost of two million rand. Other significant donations towards the College were made by the Indian Sugar Association, Mr Ramphal Singh, and the Lockhat and Moolla Trust.

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This has been given just as an illustration of the contributions made by the Indian community in South Africa towards education. Similar examples, though some may be less ambitious than the others, could be quoted from Kenya, Uganda, Mauritius, Guyana, Fiji and other places where Indians have settled. Welfare bodies such as the Child Welfare Society, the Blind Society, the Deaf and Dumb Association and Orphanages have received the support of the Indians of South Africa. Welfare organizations have been supported by the Indian settlers in other parts of the world as well. Wherever Indians have settled the philanthropists among them will be remembered. In Southern Africa some of the respected names in this category are Nanji Kalidas Mehta, M.L. Sultan, Madhvani, V.N. Naik and R.K. Khan.

Indians have also contributed towards the needs of the other communities. While making financial sacrifices to solve their own educational and social problems, they have also been sufficiently charitable towards the needs of others. The Arya Yuvuk Sabha has established the Aryan Benevolent Home in Durban. This institution is also subsidised by the State. Similar orphanages are found in Fiji, Mauritius and other places. These orphanages are not generally restricted to the children of any particular religious group or community. In Nairobi the Dayanand Home is under the control of the Nairobi Arya Samaj. This institution has African children also as inmates. At the Gandhi Settlement situated at Phoenix in Natal a free dispensary has been made available to African children. The Arya Samaj, Ramakrishna Mission, Divine Life Society and other such organizations are engaged in humanitarian services wherever they exist.

Indians have continued to make contributions towards the education of the indigenous people as well. In 1960 Indians of South Africa marked the Centenary of their arrival in the country by establishing the Indian Centenary Scholarship Trust with an initial capital of two hundred thousand rand (two million Rupees). The interest earned from the investment of this amount is utilised for the purpose of awarding annual bursaries to students of all the racial groups engaged in University education. An amount of R17 309 was awarded in 1974.

The Indians of Natal established the Natal Educational Trust for the purpose of giving financial assistance towards the education of the Bantu children. The Trust has a capital of five hundred thousand rand (five million Rupees). The interest earned makes it possible for a total annual contribution of twenty-five thousand rand to be made towards the high school education of the Bantu children. The money is being used by the Bantus to make additional high schools available for the Bantu pupils. In 1974 this Trust made it possible for a Teacher-training school project to be launched in Umlazi which is an area for Bantu settlement. A contribution of twenty-five thousand rand has just been made to Dr Dube who is engaged in establishing a residential high school for African children in close proximity to the Mahatma

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Gandhi Settlement at Phoenix (Natal). The buildings will also have a hall, a library and an administrative block. In the Province of the Transvaal in South Africa, an Indian has contributed ten thousand rand towards a library project in a Bantu location.

These charitable activities are being quoted to illustrate the type of financial assistance that is being given towards the education of the Bantu children in South Africa. Indians in other parts of the world are similarly engaged in contributing their share towards those who are less privileged around them. Indians in Southern Africa are conscious of the fact that in the field of education, the Bantu children are in need of financial assistance.

Indian traders have settled in many parts of the world and own business concerns that are well-established. It has been a traditional practice for these people to send a part of their income to their families still living in India. Such family attachments are understandable when some members of a closely-knit family decide to find the means of livelihood thousands of miles away from their home in India. Any British or Japanese businessman would tend to react in a similar manner. Many professors and doctors who are engaged in educational pursuits abroad also contribute to the financial needs of some of the members of their families who are still in India.

In common with all progressive nations of the world, to take advantage of business opportunities for monetary gain, the Indian traders have been no exceptions. The acquisition of wealth is a common characteristic among all businessmen. Why should the tag of exploitation be associated with the Indian traders only? All business establishments are subject to government control. Indians have not complained about any restrictive measures that are introduced in the interest of the nation, particularly in the emergent states.

It is over a century now that Indian traders have established themselves in various parts of the world. They have the necessary capital and experience for such ventures. If, in place of uprooting such people, the emergent states took a more tolerant view of the situation, the result would definitely have been a sharing of their knowledge of business by the interested and capable members of the new nations. Such a spirit of trust and co-operation would have given a favourable impetus to the national economy. The desire to dispossess the Indian traders has been a severe blow to these people. It is the duty of all the race groups in a country to realise that the interest of the country is of first importance and Indians can never be unmindful of this fact. It ought to become the responsibility of the government of a country that the livelihoods of the minority groups are not snatched away from them in an arbitrary manner.

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SOCIAL RELATIONSHIP

Indians who have settled abroad have invariably come into contact with other racial groups. They have had to make the necessary social adjustments to ensure a harmonious living in a new country. This is a well-established fact. Many of the countries where Indians went to work under the system of indenture had not yet experienced the full impact of western civilization which had become the agency of bringing many peoples of the world together in several of the lesser known parts of the world. In such places it became imperative for new culture patterns to emerge. Mauritius, Fiji, Guyana and parts of Africa could be counted among such countries. The people of various nationalities have come together in these places and nowhere has there yet emerged a single fully-integrated group.

The social integration of people belonging to divergent cultural and racial groups is not always possible. The Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam is an Indian religious organization that subscribes to the ideal of the kinship of mankind. But such a philosophy does not really work in practice. Everyday experience shows that the subtler cultural differences make it difficult for the various groups of people to integrate into a single community. Indians who have a common racial origin are still divided into diverse cultural, religious and language groups. Islam which is based on the principle of universal brotherhood has also given rise to religious sects that do not always think alike. Similarly, although the Bantus appear to belong to a single racial group, they are in fact subdivided into numerous ethnic groups and tribal rivalries are so acute that factional violence and brutalities have become a common feature of the African continent. Where Europeans, Coloureds, Indians and Africans have come together, great impediments to racial harmony have arisen in the form of inherent racial and cultural differences which create chasms of misunderstanding, intolerance, prejudice and incompatibility that are difficult to bridge.

But yet it is most surprising to see that, as a result of human understanding, different racial groups living together in many parts of the world have been able to gloss over their differences and have emerged as a nation with a common purpose. The greater national harmony that has been achieved by them far outweighs the domestic differences that still exist. The conflicts and clashes among the peoples of the world carry banner headlines while no word is uttered about the peace that exists. The newspapers, the politicians and some others that are in search of self-interest, do not seem to be impressed by the conditions that foster peace and harmony.

Social harmony among the peoples of different racial and cultural origins does emerge in the course of time. Such a desirable condition cannot be enforced by law or be effected in haste. Racial differences result from the divergent religions, languages, cultures, traditions,

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historical factors and geographical origins. There are many deeply ingrained differences that cannot be removed at a stroke of the pen. Established traditions do not change overnight. The question of marriage poses the most difficult problem where racial and cultural differences exist. Matrimony is based on mutual tolerance, understanding, enlightenment and also foresight. But an essential element in social harmony is a polite and courteous behaviour. There must be a spirit of tolerance where differences exist. Racial co-operation and harmony will only become possible when the feeling of high and low is erased and racial pride is suppressed.

Racial harmony is a gradual process that comes into being most imperceptibly. Especially Indians living abroad have already been in contact with people of other races over a long period and racial co-operation is not an insuperable problem to them. They have become convinced that, for the welfare of the community to which they belong, they cannot perpetrate narrow-mindedness or bigotry. Their attitudes have become more accommodating where the people of other racial groups are concerned. They have not remained shackled to the social traditions that militate against the common weal. A clear illustration of this assertion are the Hindus who claim to be the followers of the Sanatana Dharma. They have in fact, either unconsciously or tacitly, abandoned many practices and superstitious beliefs which they had regarded as essential parts of the Hindu religion.

It has become a common characteristic of the Indian society that they remained most resolutely attached to their old customs and traditions. The caste system is an illustration of this idiosyncrasy and social tenacity. The Pauranic religious beliefs and practices are still existent among many Hindus who have settled in foreign countries. These people have continued to be so narrow in their outlook that they have become self-righteous about their own importance. They have to succumb to make way for the new social ethos. There is a need for an increased social participation of the different groups in sports, entertainments, social get-to-gethers, festivals and celebrations. These activities provide an ideal opportunity for the encouragement of a better mutual understanding. Positive efforts could be made in breaking the social barriers by inviting to the social occasions some of the representatives of the groups whose co-operation and friendship one values.

Differences based on colour and race are still prevalent among the Indians in many parts of the world. The European settlers have adhered more strongly to the colour prejudice. In South Africa the official policy of separate development is based on racial differentiation. This has given rise to the opposing philosophy of black consciousness which idolizes the dignity and colour of the black man. The intense nationalism that this has evoked came most clearly to the fore in Uganda. The African people have also adopted the attitude of racial pride. Factions have developed among them and tribal horrors have

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been perpetrated. In Rwanda and Burundi there have been massacres and inter-tribal strife leading to the destruction of life and property. Tribal clashes have now become a common feature on the African continent.

The Negroes of Guyana have encouraged racial hatred by adopting a spirit of avowed intolerance towards the Indians of the country. The practice of the caste system and ingrained racial prejudices have made it difficult for a more tolerant social order to evolve. All the racial groups, and particularly the Indian settlers abroad, that are destined to live together in various parts of the world, must take cognizance of this fact and they must make a conscious effort to engender a spirit of racial harmony.

People learn from experience and the force of circumstances. In the course of time, particularly the new nations of the world, will become more tolerant of racial differences and there will come into being a social order in which the dignity of man will be established and the security of one's life and property will be ensured.

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CHAPTER V

PROPAGATION OF RELIGION

The first batch of indentured Indians left the shores of India for Mauritius in 1834. The Hindu religion in India at this time was at an extremely low level of influence. In Bengal the religious reformer, Raja Ram Mohan Roy, had died a year earlier. In 1860 when the Indian immigrants first set foot on the soil of South Africa, the religious revolutionary and maker of modern India, Swami Dayanand Saraswati, had just arrived at the abode of his revered guru, Swami Virjanand.

At this point in history, when India itself was steeped in ignorance, mainly illiterate Indians left India in large numbers to seek their livelihood in foreign countries. Their religious beliefs were based chiefly on superstitions and meaningless rituals. The caste system persisted among them. They clung strongly to the religious and cultural patterns of life to which they had become accustomed in India and they did this with a degree of pride. During the first fifty years of their settlement abroad no new religious influence reached them from India. Beyond the government circles, hardly any interest was shown in these Indians that had settled abroad, and there were no cultural leaders to inspire them to higher ideals.

ARYA SAMAJ - THE FORERUNNER OF RELIGIOUS AWAKENING

It was the Arya Samaj that undertook the task of taking the message of the Vedas to the Indians that had settled abroad. Historical research brings to light the active role of the Arya Samaj in the religious life of the Hindus abroad. Some examples are being given to substantiate this assertion.

MAURITIUS

An Indian soldier in a regiment stationed in Mauritius kindled the light of the Vedic religion by introducing the Satyarth Prakash in the country in 1902. Under the guidance of Mr Manilall (Doctor), Mr Khemlall and Mr Goorooprasad Duljeet the first Arya Samaj was established in Mauritius in 1910. Dr C. Bhardwaj arrived from India in 1911 and became the pioneer of the Arya Samaj movement in Mauritius.

FIJI

The Satyarth Prakash was first taken to Fiji by a Punjabi youth named Beharilall in 1904. The message of the Arya Samaj thus spread

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to Fiji. Mr Pratap Singh and Pandit Sheodutt took the initiative and established the Arya Samaj in the country.

SOUTH AFRICA

Prof. Bhai Parmanand arrived in South Africa in 1905 with the message of the Vedas. Swami Shankaranand visited the country in 1908 and created a widespread religious awakening among the Hindus. The first Arya Samaj was established in Pietermaritzburg in 1908.

GUYANA

Prof. Bhai Parmanand was the first religious preacher from India to visit Guyana in 1910. His influence created a religious awakening among the Hindus. Pandit Ramnath and Mr Satyanarayan were responsible for the founding of the Arya Samaj in Guyana in 1921.

BANGKOK

Mr Gajharji Bhuj unexpectedly obtained a copy of the Satyarth Prakash from a waste-paper dealer. It was brought to the notice of Mr Palakdhari Singh and Mr Ramdev Singh who became keenly interested in this work of Swami Dayanand. The Vedic Dharma Pracharini Sabha was formed in 1920.

BURMA

At the time when the Arya Samaj movement had gained momentum in Punjab, its influence also spread to Burma. An Arya Samaj was established in Rangoon in 1898.

KENYA

In 1903 the Arya Samaj was established at the home of Mr Jai Gopal. Mr Indra Singh and Mr Badrinath were some of the pioneers of the movement.

Thus many examples could be given of the influence of the Arya Samaj in the countries abroad where Indians had settled. For more than thirty years of the Twentieth Century the Arya Samaj was the most active religious body that worked among the Hindu settlers abroad. Had the Arya Samaj not intervened in these countries, there was the distinct possibility of many Hindus turning to Christianity for religious deliverance. Total conversion to Christianity took place in Reunion and on many of the islands of the West Indies.

Prior to the advent of the Arya Samaj movement in the countries abroad, the caste system had exerted a strong influence among the Hindus and there was an absence of understanding of their religion among them. The festivals of India were being forgotten and the Mohuram had gained a place of importance in their lives. They constructed the thajias and sang the dirges associated with this Muslim

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festival. The Hindus were thus gradually coming under the strong influence of both Christianity and Islam. At this stage the Arya Samaj appeared on the scene with the banner of the Vedic religion held high. The Hindus were made conscious of their ancient heritage and a sense of religious pride was rekindled in them.

The work that was done by the Arya Samaj in the first quarter of the Twentieth Century earned the praise of the great friend of the Indians abroad, Rev. C.F. Andrews, in words that actually gave the Samaj added prestige. He stated that he was exceedingly impressed with the work that the Arya Samaj had undertaken to ameliorate the position of the Indians that had settled abroad. The Arya Samaj, according to him, was the only body that stressed the importance of Hindi and the most ancient Vedic religion. Kenya, Zanzibar, Uganda, Tanganyika, South Africa, Fiji, Mauritius and Singapore were some of the countries abroad where the the Arya Samaj had contributed to the preservation of the Indian heritage. The most significant work of the Arya Samaj had been the encouragement it gave to education. The Arya Samaj was imbued with life, vigour and enthusiasm. Rev. Andrews also expressed great delight when he became aware that the Samaj had taken an active part in providing education for the African children of East Africa. Among the organizations that were engaged in improving the conditions of the Indians abroad, there had been none as active, vigorous and full of enthusiasm as the Arya Samaj. (The Plight of Indians Abroad (in Hindi), by Swami Bhawani Dayal Sannyasi, p. 276)

It becomes clearly evident that the Arya Samaj played a major role in the religious and cultural awakening of the Indians in the countries abroad.

THE SATYARTH PRAKASH (Light of Truth)

The religious revolution that was brought about by the Satyarth Prakash among the Hindus abroad could not have been made possible by any other means. In every country this religious work of Swami Dayanand contributed to a religious revival based on the Vedas. It captured the imagination of youth. The mind of the Hindu youth had begun to doubt the fundamentals of the Hindu religion and the rituals were even less impressive to them. Their religious loyalties were weakening. The appearance of the Satyarth Prakash at this stage rejuvenated the Hindu youth as many perplexing questions were answered most cogently in this authoritative work of Swami Dayanand.

In 1904 a youth who happened to call at the Port of Fiji made the Satyarth Prakash available to some of the Hindus there. In 1902 the soldier of a regiment introduced this work in Mauritius and in 1920 a copy of the book was obtained unexpectedly from a waste-paper dealer in Bangkok. Such circumstances were sufficient to kindle the light of religious enlightenment that later shone with ever-increasing

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brilliance. In the hours of the evening, after the day's task, the Hindus who cherished religious ideals, gathered to read the religious books that were available to them. The Satyarth Prakash captured the interest of many among them.

The younger Hindus read this work despite the objections that were raised by the older generation who had become obdurate and were opposed to any suggested change. Those among the Hindu youth who could not read Hindi were fired with an ambition to learn the language. The Satyarth Prakash gained wide popularity and there was a tremendous religious awakening among the Hindus abroad and the Arya Samaj soon became a strongly-established movement.

By reading the Satyarth Prakash the Hindus became proud of their ancient religion which is free of dogma and superstition. It gives them moral courage; it creates a new faith in them; they become eager to delve into the truth; they develop religious and national loyalties; they begin to question the meaningless rituals; they are able to defend their religious tenets against the attacks of other religions; and they become deeply conscious and proud of the fact that their religion has had its origin in the very ancient past and that the Vedic mantras had emerged from the pure and perceptive minds of the distinguished rishis of yore. Nay, the consciousness dawns that the Vedas are given to mankind for its lasting benefit. Swami Dayanand publicised the truths contained in the Vedas to all mankind.

The study of the Satyarth Prakash gave renewed faith to the Hindus in their own religion and it became a matter of pride to them that they had inherited the religion and culture of the ancient Aryans. Many uncompromising Pauranic Hindus have, in the course of time, become staunch adherents of the Vedic religion as outlined by Swami Dayanand.

THE INFLUENCE OF THE ARYA SAMAJ

It has been the mission of the Arya Samaj to bring about a religious awakening among the Hindus. The success it has achieved is an illustrious chapter in its history. The Samaj also caused a stir among the orthodox Hindus who tended to adhere to meaningless rituals and were not susceptible to change. They viewed the Arya Samaj with contempt and disfavour. The opposition to the Arya Samaj movement was most vigorous in the early days. At times the antagonism could not be allayed and heated religious debates ensued. The followers of the Arya Samaj had to face moments of despair and frustration. But with the passage of time all Hindus have begun to appreciate the teachings of the Vedic religion.

The Arya Samaj acted as a bastion when attacks were levelled against Hinduism and many Hindus were prevented from being converted to other religious faiths. In this age of logic and science the clarity with which Swami Dayanand has expounded the Vedic religion

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has given to Hinduism a new dimension in the modern world. In many foreign countries of the world where the different religions have converged, the Vedic philosophy has also made its impact. The orthodox Hindus have already voluntarily abandoned many superstitious beliefs and meaningless rituals and in this the influence exerted by the Arya Samaj is clearly evident.

The Arya Samaj has had a considerable influence on the religious ceremonies of Hindus. The performance of the yajna has gained popularity. Many of the sanskars are now being observed. Cremation was not always permitted by the governments of some countries abroad, but today this has become an accepted practice. Some Europeans also prefer cremation to burial. In many instances the reading of the Upanishad has now replaced the Satyanarayan Katha of the orthodox Hindus. There is also a discernible change in the orthodox wedding ceremony and several Vedic procedures have been adopted by them. Ramnaumi, Krishnastmi and Shivaratri are being observed by a greater majority of the Hindus, while the Deepavali is celebrated in almost every Hindu home in South Africa. The Rakshabandhan and Holi have now captured the interest of an increasing number of Hindus. The Hindu orthodoxy has undergone a tremendous change and who can doubt the influence of the Arya Samaj and Swami Dayanand in this process of the acceptance of the Vedic tenets?

HINDU ORGANIZATIONS

After 1925 many Hindu religious organizations other than the Arya Samaj were established. These bodies have also worked to awaken a new consciousness among the Hindus. As a result of the activities of the Arya Samaj, Sanathan Dharma Sabhas were also formed in many places.

Besides these sabhas, in the past twenty-five years the Ramakrishna Mission and the Divine Life Society were also established at many centres. The Bharat Sevasharam Sangh, Arvind Society and the Hare-Krishna movement are also engaged in serving the cause of the Hindu religion. In addition to their religious work, many of these bodies are also engaged in social service. These organizations are using the English language as a means of communication, with the result that their appeal to the present-day youth has been very significant.

In the western countries yoga and Vedanta have exerted a strong influence. In Europe and America the Hindu philosophy of the Vedanta has gained an ever-increasing popularity. Christianity has not altogether satisfied the spiritual cravings of the western mind and many people in the west, particularly the younger generation, are turning to the eastern philosophies for spiritual solace. But there is the possibility that western youths are being attracted by a fashionable trend and the depth of their religious conviction will only unfold in the course of time.

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Arya Samajes have been established in all the countries abroad where the Hindus have settled. The Arya Pratinidhi Sabhas have unified the many Samajes that have been formed in each country. The Pratinidhi Sabha of a country is in turn affiliated to the Sarvadeshik Arya Pratinidhi Sabha of New Delhi (India). Thus the influence of the Arya Samaj has become almost universal.

ARYAN MISSIONARIES

It has already been stated that the Arya Samaj was the first religious organization to serve the Hindus that had settled abroad. As from 1905 religious missionaries from India have travelled abroad regularly to preach the Hindu or the Vedic religion. In the first quarter of this century, mainly the missionaries of the Arya Samaj movement ventured overseas, carrying with them the message of the Vedas to many lands. They also kindled the torch of learning in many remote parts of the world.

These Aryan preachers could be placed in two categories, namely, the itinerant preachers and those who resided in a country more permanently. To the first group belonged the many prominent scholars, pandits and sannyasis. While they propagated the Vedic religion, they generally exerted a beneficial influence on the Hindu communities of the places that they visited. Many members of the other communities as well showed a keen interest in the Vedic religion, philosophy and culture.

The names of some of the distinguished preachers who travelled to other countries are given here.

BHAI PARMANAND, M.A.

In 1905 he toured East Africa, South Africa, England and other European countries. His mission took him to British Guyana in 1910.

SWAMI SHANKARANAND

He arrived in South Africa in 1908. He remained in the country for five years doing missionary work. He visited the Transvaal and the Cape as well. Later he went to England and certain other European countries.

DR CHIRANJIVA BHARDWAJ

He spent some time in Burma and in 1911 he arrived in Mauritius where he became actively engaged in the work of the Arya Samaj.

SWAMI SWATANTRANAND

He visited Mauritius in 1914 and again in 1950. In 1921 and 1949 his missionary work took him to Kenya, Uganda and Tanganyika in East Africa.

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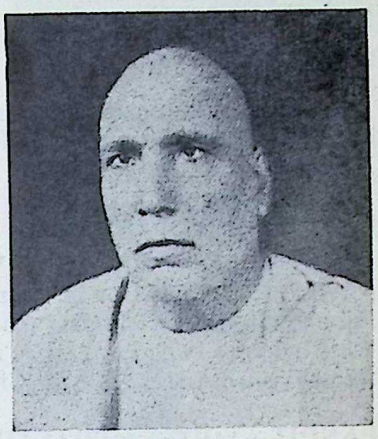
Swami Shankaranand



Swami Swatantranand

Prof. Bhai Parmanand

Dr Chiranjiva Bhardwaj

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PANDIT ISHWARDUTT VIDYALANKAR

In 1920 and 1921 he toured East Africa and South Africa as a Vedic preacher. He gave an outstanding display of the feats of yoga and archery wherever he went.

THAKUR PRAVINSINGH

He used the medium of music and songs to spread the Vedic teachings. In 1921 he was in East Africa and in 1922 he visited South Africa. In 1925 he toured Siam.

PANDIT MEHTA JAIMINI

He carried the message of the Vedas and Hindu culture to many parts of the world. He toured South-East Asia and Mauritius in 1925; Fiji and Burma in 1928; Guyana, Trinidad and other places in the West Indies in 1929; East Africa in 1931; and South Africa in 1934. He also visited America, Japan, China and some European countries.

PANDIT AYODHYA PRASAD

In 1933 he participated in the World Conference of Religions. From 1933 to 1935 he was engaged as a Vedic preacher in Trinidad, Guyana and Surinam.

DR. BHAGATRAM SAHAGAL

His missionary work took him to East Africa in 1928 and to South Africa in 1929. His foreign tours included Bangkok.

PANDIT ANAND PRIYA

He accompanied the Baroda Girl Guides in 1934 to East Africa and South Africa.

PANDIT BHASKARANAND

In 1936 he toured Surinam, Trinidad and other places in the West Indies as a Vedic preacher.

PANDIT GANGAPRASAD UPADHYAYA

He visited South Africa as a Vedic preacher in 1950 and went to Burma, Bangkok and other places in South-East Asia in 1952.

PANDIT USHARBUDH

In 1952 he visited Kenya, Uganda and Tanganyika in East Africa. In 1955 he toured Guyana and other parts of the West Indies, including America. He was in Fiji in 1972.

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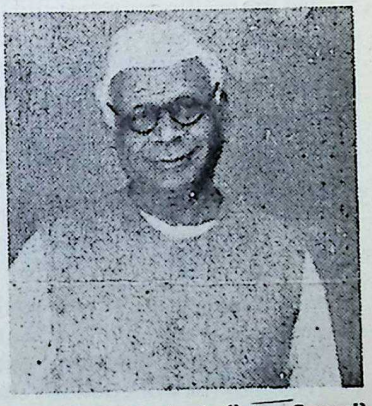
Dr Bhagatram Sahagal

Pt. Ishwardutt Vidyalankar

Pandit Bhawani Dayal - (later Swami)

Pt. Gangaprasad Upadhyaya



Prof. Satya Prakash (later Swami)

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SWAMI DHRUVANAND

In 1957 he toured Mauritius and East Africa. Later his missionary work took him to Thailand, Singapore and other places in South-East Asia.

SWAMI VIDYANAND

He visited East Africa and Mauritius as a Vedic missionary.

SWAMI ABHEDANAND

His tours included East Africa and Mauritius.

SWAMI ANAND BHIKSHU

He was a renowned Vedic preacher in East Africa and Mauritius.

MAHATMA ANAND SWAMI

Since 1960 he has travelled to many countries as a Vedic preacher, including Burma, Thailand, Fiji, Singapore, East Africa, Mauritius and England.

SWAMI SATYA PRAKASH

He has become a recognized Vedic preacher. His fluent use of the English language enabled him to become a useful missionary in East Africa, South Africa and Mauritius. He has also visited several European countries.

RESIDENT PREACHERS

While the itinerant preachers carried the message of the Vedas to many countries, there were also some among them who stayed more permanently in certain countries. Their religious activities were restricted to specific countries and they were able to consolidate the work of the Arya Samaj. The temporary preachers always aroused a great deal of enthusiasm among the people but this interest did not continue after the visitors had departed. Whenever it became possible to have a preacher on a more permanent basis, the work of the Arya Samaj became more purposeful. Such a preacher was able to keep a constant vigilance on the activities of the Samaj. The preachers in this group included those local residents who returned to serve the people of their own countries after having obtained a measure of religious training in India.

These preachers are not so widely known but their contribution to religious work in the countries that they served is unique in the work of the Arya Samaj. It has become necessary to compile a detailed historical record of the work done by such preachers. The names of just a few of them are given here.

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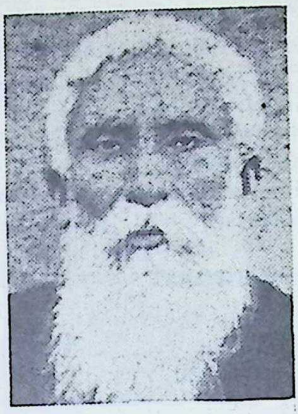
VEDIC PREACHERS AND MISSIONARIES



Pandit Pravinsingh

Mahatma Anand Swami

SWAMI DHRUVANAND

Pandit Mehta Jaimini

Pandit Anand Priya

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Mauritius: Pandit Kashinath Kistoe; Prof. B. Bissoondoyal.
South Africa : Swami Bhawani Dayal Sannyasi and Pandit Nardev Vedalankar.
Kenya : Pandit Satyapal Siddhantalankar; Pandit Gyanchandra.
Tanzania : Pandit Doorlabhdev and Prof Dilipkumar Vedalankar.
Fiji : Pandit Vishnudeo and Pandit Amichandra Vidyalankar.
Burma : Doctor Gurudutt; Pandit Chandradutt, Sahitya Ratna.
Bangkok : Pandit Nandlall Vanprasthi.
South America and the West Indies : Pandit Bhaskaranand; Pandit (Dr) Usharbudh and Pandit Ayodhya Prasad.

PIONEERS OF THE ARYA SAMAJ ABROAD

The Vedic preachers brought about a religious awakening among the Hindus in the countries abroad and the teachings of the Vedas became widely accepted. But in every country the actual work of the Arya Samaj depended on the unenviable task undertaken by some of the great stalwarts of the movement among the local residents. They belonged to the group that had to face the brunt of the antagonism that the Arya Samaj invariably aroused among the orthodox Hindus in the early days. A historical record of these pioneers seems to be highly desirable.

OTHER RELIGIOUS PREACHERS

Besides the preachers of the Arya Samaj, there have been other Hindu scholars, pandits and sannyasis who also toured the countries abroad and contributed to a better understanding of the Hindu religion. Swami Vivekanand, Swami Ramthiratha, Rabindranath Tagore and Sarvapalli Radhakrishnan were Indian philosophers and thinkers who captured the imagination of the world. They made it possible for the western world to get a clearer understanding of the cultural heritage of India. But their influence among the Indians abroad has not been significant.

In the recent years the Ramakrishna Mission and the Divine Life Society succeeded in arousing a religious fervour among the Hindus and their branches and ashrams have been established abroad. They have given Hinduism a great impetus. Their success has been the result of the use of the English language in all their activities. The Hindu youth have been favourably influenced by their religious campaigns and literature.

Swami Venktesvaranand of the Divine Life Society has become famous as a preacher of Hinduism. He has travelled widely and has conveyed the message of the Gita and the Upanishads to the nations of the West as well. Swami Krishnananda has proved to be an untiring worker among the Hindus abroad. He has visited many parts of the world and he has aroused among the Hindus a deep sense of pride in their religion. He served the Asians of East Africa during the time of

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the political upheaval that disturbed the lives of the settled Indic... communities there. He has a very clear grasp of the political situation in Africa and he has undertaken the task of spreading the benign influence of religion in this part of the world.

CONVERSION AND SHUDDHI

Some people regard religion as the cause of unnecessary controversies and quarrels. But social harmony has now become the cardinal principle in the work of many religious preachers. Mr Banarasi Chaturvedi, a great friend of Indians abroad, states in his writings that religion is intended to engender a spirit of fellow-feeling among the peoples of the world. Religious disputes are unnecessary and harmful. It is a basic tenet of religion that we must live in harmony with others. Love, peace and amicable relations are the fundamental principles of religion. Even those whose mission it is to spread the truth of some religion cannot overlook the importance of courtesy and kindness. Harsh words cannot win the hearts of those one sets out to reform.

When one advocates the preaching of the Hindu religion, it is not intended that this should lead to any ill-will between the Hindus and the followers of other religions. Just as in India, it has become a matter of concern abroad that the Hindus must not be allowed to abandon their pride in their cultural heritage. Particularly among the Hindus abroad, the ties of religion have become very tenuous and they are being attracted to other religions more easily. On the island of Reunion all the Hindus have now converted to Christianity. The same could be said of Granada and St. Lucia in the West Indies. They are completely western in outlook and it is only by appearance that they could be recognized as people of Indian origin. They have abandoned their religion, language and culture. The weakening of the cultural ties of Indians in South Africa and in many other parts of the world, causes apprehension among those Hindus who still value their tradition and culture.

Among the followers of the different religions there must be a feeling of equality, a spirit of understanding and religious tolerance. But the daily problems of living have to be approached according to one's religious beliefs. There is an urgent need today for the Hindus to become conscious of the value of their religion and to take a pride in belonging to it. Regular religious and cultural gatherings should be encouraged. This will help the straying Hindus to find a greater solace in their own religion and thus the need for conversion to another faith will not arise. Religious disputes will also disappear.

It seems evident that the Hindus abroad have become indifferent to their religion and they lack the enthusiasm to keep their religion alive and to prevent cultural decay. Nothing can be achieved without some faith in one's beliefs. One must also have the courage of one's convictions and there must be a readiness to make the necessary sacrifices

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for the advancement of a good cause. In the absence of such qualities, the Hindus will lose the initiative in maintaining the prestige of their religion and in the wake of conversions to other faiths, they would become mere onlookers lacking in purpose and direction.

The fact that the Hindu religion has gained recognition in the countries of Europe and in America is a matter of great satisfaction. It is pleasing to note that the Hindu religion and philosophy now have a following in the West. This is regarded as some victory for Hinduism. But, on the other hand, no thought is given to the thousands of Hindus abroad being converted to Christianity. The conversion of Hindus to other faiths has become an issue of great importance to those who are interested in the cultural heritage of India.

REASONS FOR CONVERSION

In the early days of the settlement of Indians abroad, the Christian missions carried out vigorous campaigns of conversion. The economic and social conditions of the Hindus at the time were pathetic. The ministers were always interested in the problems and difficulties of the immigrant Indians and in almost all the countries abroad, the Christian missions took it upon themselves to establish schools for the children of the Indian settlers. They also established hospitals and visited the homes of those who were in need. They offered special prayers for the sick.

Assistance was given by the ministers to those who were unemployed, particularly by means of favourable recommendations to the employers. This attitude of service was a major factor in the influence that the missions exerted among the Indians. At this time the Hindus had not become an organized group that could muster the resources to render any service to the needy. Conversion to Christianty offered to some of the Hindus a convenient means of deliverance from their problems. The Indians had already found themselves under a government that was of Christian culture.

In the initial stages conversion to Christianity offered better opportunities for employment. In the government service and especially in the teaching profession, the prospects for promotion became more promising. Many young Hindus took advantage of the situation and became Christians. A contributory factor was the considerable lack of knowledge among the Hindu youth about their religion. They had not yet come into contact with the preachers of the Hindu religion and they found that there was nothing to restrain them from renouncing the Hindu religion.

Occasionally young couples intending to marry are also posed with the question of conversion before the wedding ceremony. In a western society, the dignified manner in which the church conducts the wedding appeals to many among the Indian youth. It is mainly the Hindu

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youth that becomes a Christian when the question of marriage arises and not **vice versa.** The Hindu Society has also become less intolerant in such situations. What this forebodes for the future of Hinduism is not an issue that can be treated lightly.

Another matter that deserves attention is the state of the Hindu society itself. The rejection of human dignity inherent in the caste system has been the direct cause of many conversions. Many superstitious beliefs and meaningless rituals have been responsible for showing Hinduism in a less favourable light. Not many among the new generation have been nurtured in an environment where the Vedic view of life prevails.

Despite the rapid educational and economic progress of all sections of the Indians abroad, it is a sad commentary on the situation that cultural traditions have lagged behind. Even today many Hindus emphasize astrology and spirits, both benign and evil. Many Hindu families have lived under the strong influence of superstitions and a belief in supernatural powers that have to be placated to ensure their health and happiness. Christianity acts like a magic wand and promises to place the followers out of the reach of all evil.

It is the weakness of Hindu society that it is very easily persuaded to believe in evil spirits, charms and miracles. Hindus who are supposed to be the followers of the Bhagavada Gita and the law of karma fall a prey to wishful thinking when they try to rid themselves of all the afflictions by propitiating some lurking spirit; they try to amass wealth in a trice by similar communication with the world of spirits; and they also try to obtain exalted positions by like means. They seem to forget the basic principle that progress is the result of labour that is undertaken with dedication. There must be endurance and sacrifice. The yeoman with faith in nature, clears the forest, ploughs the field and sows his crops; and it is much later that he reaps his golden harvest. This simple example contains a philosophy that is far more profound than the superstitious beliefs of some Hindus. Conversion to other faiths would flourish where ignorance is rife.

What has been just stated gives some insight into the cultural trends in the Hindu society in the countries abroad. The future of Hindu religion and culture will grow bleaker, unless a determined effort is made to propagate Hinduism and to ensure its future.

CONSOLIDATION OF HINDUISM

It seems that the Hindu leaders have not yet given sufficient thought to the preservation of Hinduism and the protection of the Hindu society against conversion; or, alternatively, they have not been able to consolidate their forces to establish a unity of purpose. Hindu society and its leaders must look at the issue in its true perspective and try to understand the forces that are at work in undermining Hindu society. Are we prepared to accept the challenge? Is it possible to make a more

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vigorous effort and to ensure that Hinduism becomes a matter of pride in every Hindu home? It is imperative for all the Hindu organizations to come together and to find a common purpose in order to save the weakening structure of Hindu society.

This suggestion is not intended to create antagonism in the Indian community, or to attack the principles of any religion. It has become a matter of moral obligation to make the Hindu society stronger, more vigorous and proud by means of arousing a greater consciousness of the excellence of its cultural heritage.

The Hindus must adopt a more positive attitude. While showing the greatest respect to the persons belonging to other faiths, it is possible for us to make our religious convictions stronger. Instead of rejecting those that have left the Hindu fold, they should be welcomed back to Hindu society. Even persons of other religious beliefs should be encouraged to share the benefits of Hinduism in the spiritual field if they so desire.

The vast majority of Hindus are still orthodox in outlook and they are not willing to accept non-Hindus into their fold. A Hindu preacher from India, whilst visiting Durban in 1968, stated that a Hindu is born; he cannot become a Hindu. Such a view must be rejected completely. A person who believes that the caste system is based on birth cannot understand how a person adopting the Hindu faith can be classified into any of the established castes. Such views have contributed to the weakening of Hinduism. Compare Hindu society with a vessel containing water; it has developed a leak; and the damage is neither being repaired nor is the water being replenished. It is essential for healthier views to prevail in order that the Hindu society abroad could be preserved for all time instead of being allowed to waste away.

The Arya Samaj is the only organization that became alive to the perilous state of Hindu society and started a most vigorous campaign to restore its ancient prestige. It allows a non-Hindu to adopt the Hindu religion. But the shuddhi movement itself must be made to suit the present time. It has become necessary for shuddhi to be placed on a new basis altogether to make it more practicable. This can be achieved if all the Hindu institutions could unite. In this connection the bodies that should come together to take the initiative are the Arya Samaj, Sanathan Dharma Sabha, Ramakrishna Mission, Divine Life Society, Tamil Vedic Society, Bharat Seva Samiti and other organizations serving the cause of Hindu religion and culture. If this can be achieved Hinduism in South Africa, at least, could look forward to a brighter future.

RELIGIOUS PREACHERS

The preaching of religion has been a traditional practice in India where a great deal has been learnt from the Christian missionaries.

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But the method of preaching has to be revised in the light of the modern world. In addition to the necessary qualities required for this type of work, the prospective preachers must undergo a course of training. They must also be able to acquire some experience under proper guidance before they become recognized preachers. They must also possess some knowledge of human psychology. They must be calm by nature and be of a friendly disposition.

They must be salaried preachers with modern means of transport. Their work can become more effective if they utilise audio-visual aids. Even the ordinary people today are desirous of making their lives as comfortable as possible and we expect the religious preachers to be like saints undergoing penance and austerity. The preachers thus place their services at the beck and call of just any official of an organization. In this way no real success can be achieved in the field of religious work. It is of the utmost importance that our preachers be treated with the greatest respect.

To say that the Hindus who have settled abroad do not have the financial resources to engage the services of permanent preachers, is not a sound argument. There has arisen the need for a reappraisal of our values in order that people would be prepared to make sacrifices, whether financial or otherwise, more readily to support a worthy cause. It has become necessary to review the place and purpose of charity in our Hindu society. For religious and cultural progress there is a need for a resident preacher who could be able to serve the community on a more permanent basis. Visiting missionaries come occasionally and the work they do is not of a lasting nature; but a resident preacher will become a source of tremendous influence in Hindu religion. Other centres in the country could also benefit from his presence.

Suitably qualified preachers among the Hindus settled abroad are very limited. In many countries stringent control on immigration has made it difficult to obtain preachers who could serve a country on a more permanent basis. This difficulty could be overcome if encouragement is given to young Hindus of ability and promise to undergo a course of training in India as preachers. They must be assisted by means of scholarships. If such a system is established, the Hindus abroad need not despair about the future of their religion and culture. Some arrangements could also be made locally to train additional preachers and some priests.

In order to ensure permanence and continuity in the work of the Arya Samaj, it has become necessary to establish ashrams abroad where sannyasis and vanprasthis could take residence for longer periods. Such ashrams could contribute immeasurably to the perpetuation of Hinduism. The Ramakrishna Mission and the Divine Life Society have become more permanently based by building ashrams and they are now a source of inspiration to the Hindu community.

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RELIGION AND LANGUAGE

The language that is used by a preacher is of great importance. The loyalty that one shows to one's language is a matter apart. The preacher who wants to exert some influence must take account of the language that is widely understood in the country. In the work of a preacher, language is merely an important means of communication. The work of the Arya Samaj is somewhat restricted today as this fact is not fully appreciated. Their preachers are mainly persons who are scholars in Hindi and not many of them are proficient in the language of the country where they wish to serve. Among the new generation of Hindus, the knowledge of Hindi or another vernacular, has become very restricted. Learned preachers of the Samaj travel abroad to spread the message of the Vedas and generally they are very highly respected wherever they go. But it is a strange social phenomenon that the audiences of such preachers always comprise persons of the older generation and there is very little contact with the youth of the Hindu community. Another feature which has emerged is that the preachers do not go very much beyond the circles of the progressive and the wealthier class of Hindus. Contact is very seldom maintained with the majority of the less-privileged Hindus.

The Hindus abroad are in need of suitable religious literature. Sanskrit or Hindi religious literature is practically of no value in many countries. Literature is now required in English, French, Dutch and other local languages spoken by the Hindus that have settled abroad. Religious literature should be published in a simple form. The Hindu youth of today are not keenly interested in the complete English version of the **Light of Truth** or the **Introduction to the Commentary on the Vedas.** The situation has changed considerably today and the Hindu youth do not have the requisite background or the cultural heritage to comprehend the philosophic contents of these books. Without suitable introductions, such books will have very little popular appeal. They do not require religious literature that is heavily weighed in the direction of philosophy. They would benefit from simplified versions of the Ramayana, the Mahabharata and other books of literary and cultural value, including biographical sketches. Religious literature should be carefully planned and published in English for the use of young children. Literature could be prepared on the various aspects of the Vedas, Upanishads and the Gita in a simple and interesting style. The stories of Rama and Krishna should be written in a manner that would capture the interest of the young children.

A more ambitious programme could include translations into English, or another language, of the Vedas, the Upanishads and the Bhagavada Gita. A complete translation of the Vedas in English is not yet available. Sayana and Max Müller have so far been the recognized authorities on the Vedas. The Arya Samaj could undertake an authentic translation of the Vedas into the English language. Such an

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authoritative translation should become a standard work of reference in the libraries of the world. The most significant task in such a translation will be to attempt a reconciliation between the interpretations of the text of the Vedas as expounded by Swami Dayanand and the other renowned Vedic scholars who preceded him.

In order to improve the position of Hinduism it has become necessary to organize religious examinations. In Mauritius and Guyana such examinations are being held. In South Africa the Veda Niketan, a section of the Arya Pratinidhi Sabha, has organized religious examinations on a very sound basis and very good progress has already been made. The work that has been undertaken covers a number of grades and literature has been especially prepared for this purpose.

EDUCATION

At the beginning of this century, the Arya Samaj was the only organization that was dedicated to the welfare of the Indians abroad. The activities of the Samaj include four major areas, namely, the propagation of the Vedic religion, welfare work (orphanages and hospitals), teaching of the Hindi language and formal education for the entire community.

The propagation of religion and social service still form the major part of the work of the Arya Samaj. From the outset the teaching of the Hindi language became a matter of urgent concern to the Arya Samaj. About sixty to seventy years ago, hardly any provision was made for the education of Indian children in the countries abroad. The Arya Samaj took the initiative and established primary schools, generally with the co-operation of the government of the country.

The Samaj made a concerted effort to raise the funds required for the building of schools. The teaching of Hindi and general primary education were the points emphasized by the Samaj. The dedication and service of the members knew no bounds and their enthusiasm was remarkable. In recent times the state has taken over the control of education in many countries and the self-imposed responsibility of the Samaj has eased considerably.

The teaching of the mother tongue has always been an important issue in the work of the Arya Samaj. In the countries where Indians have settled in large numbers, Hindi and some other languages have been included in the curricula of the schools. As it would be anticipated, several other bodies besides the Arya Samaj, also turned their attention to vernacular education. Gujerati, Tamil and Telegu have been popular among the Indian population.

The Arya Samaj will be well-advised to spend its energy in the religious field with some thought to the general welfare of the community as well. The Ramakrishna Mission and the Divine Life society are mainly concerned with religion. They are dedicated to this goal and

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the two movements have become strongly established. The Arya Samaj must also concentrate to a greater extent on the advancement of religion. Funds are required for missionary work and the publication of religious literature. There is an urgent need to create an awareness in the Hindu community about the importance of their religion and culture.

HINDUISM AND THE INDIGENOUS POPULATION

The Hindu community has not yet made a serious effort to preach about their religion, culture and civilization among the indigenous peoples of the countries abroad where Indians have settled. On the other hand, Christianity and Islam have been active among these people and conversions to both the religions have certainly taken place on a large scale. Hindus gave no serious thought to the preaching of Hinduism among the indigenous people. The caste structure of Hindu society was the real obstacle to any purposeful work in this direction. The general outlook of the Hindus has not been generous enough in the matter of accepting others into their fold.

When Sri Om Prakash Tyagi, the General Secretary of the Sarvadeshik Arya Pratinidhi Sabha, was on a lecture-tour of East Africa he was told by a responsible member of the African community that the western nations had offered to the African people a modern system of education, a democratic form of government, the western way of life and the Christian religion. He also made a further assertion that the Indians gave them practically nothing. This statement cannot be contradicted. That the Indian community failed all along to identify themselves with the peoples of Africa is an incontrovertible fact. Even the Arya Samaj did not give enough thought to this matter. The preachers from India confined their activities to the Indian community and occasionally some Europeans also took an interest in the philosophy that they preached.

The changed political situation in Africa ought to have made the Indian settlers realise that they could not afford to lose the sympathy of the people who were in control of political power. There was an urgent need for improved relations with the peoples of Africa. The true message of the Hindu religion must be conveyed to them in order that they could appreciate fully the peace-loving nature of the Indian community. India itself in its variegated history has been a country that had to meet the challenges of foreign invasions. But they always learnt to live in harmony even with the conquerors.

Though greater demands may be made on the Indians in Africa to adapt themselves to a changing situation, it is hoped that wisdom will prevail and that they would succeed once more in becoming respectable citizens where they have already lived for over a century. It is not necessary to preach about the Hindu religion to the peoples of Africa

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for the purpose of seeking their conversion. Those who are influenced by the Hindu religion must be given every encouragement to become Hindus, but it seems absolutely essential for the message of the Hindu religion to reach them preferably in their own tongues. Hinduism, like the other major religions of the world, also has the message of peace and goodwill for the benefit of mankind.

The Nairobi Arya Samaj has already accomplished something praiseworthy by accommodating African children as well at the Dayanand Home. These children are also given religious instructions based on the Hindu religion. They recite the Gayatri Mantra which forms the highest form of Hindu invocation to God; they perform the Vedic yajna and sing the Arthi which is a religious hymn of the Hindus. But the religious activities of this nature have suffered a serious setback as a result of the political changes that have taken place.

The work of Swami Krishnanand among the African population of Ghana is laudable and worthy of emulation. On 22nd of March, 1975, Swamiji initiated a Ghanaian intellectual, Mr G.K. Essel, in Accra (Ghana), into the Hindu monkhood, sannyasa, and he was given the name, Ghananand. Among the dignitaries that were present at this initiation ceremony were Mr D.P. Aasricha (Acting High Commissioner for India) and Mr T. Prakash (president of the Indian Association) and many prominent Ghanaians.

At the same time an African Hindu monastery was also established in Ghana. Mr Essel had spent some time in India where he studied the Hindu religion and philosophy. Under the leadership of Swami Ghananand, the monastery has become the centre of regular congregations, where he gives discourses on Hinduism. This weekly satsang is attended by a large number of Ghanaians. Many officials of the Government also take a keen interest in the religious activities that have commenced at this Hindu monastery. Swami Ghananand has already started training some Ghanaian youths as preachers of the Hindu religion.

This is a remarkable achievement in the name of Hindu religion. It will bring about a better understanding between the Indians and the Ghanaian people and lead to mutual respect. There will also be a feeling of sympathy towards the Indian minority. In order to strengthen the bonds of friendship suitable literature on the Hindu religion should be published in the Ghanaian language. Indian religious preachers should also learn the language that is understood by most of the Ghanaians. When a foreigner learns to communicate with the people of a country in their own language, he will find the people becoming more favourably disposed towards him and the community that he represents. It is earnestly hoped that the spread of Hinduism will provide a greater understanding of the people of Indian origin now living in many parts of Africa.

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CHAPTER VI

MOTHER TONGUE - EDUCATION - CULTURE

INDIAN LANGUAGES ABROAD

Indians went abroad from the various provinces of India. But the different language groups came together when they settled in the new colonies. It is understandable that these people did not belong to the literate class of India. Hindi and Tamil were the two languages that were predominant among them. Indians who spoke Telegu, Gujerati, Sindhi, Urdu and Punjabi were in the minority among the immigrants.

In order to solve the problem of communication during the early days of Indian settlement abroad, the Hindi language soon gained a wider acceptance. Here we find in Hindi the nucleus of a national language, long before India itself had thought about it, and even before Swami Dayanand had championed the cause of Hindi.

Hindi as a common language among the Indian settlers abroad did not depend on the majority of the settlers being Hindi-speaking. In South Africa and Burma the Indian settlers were mainly Tamil-speaking, but Hindi became established as a common means of communication among them. English was completely foreign to the people at the time. The importance of Hindi could be judged from the fact that the Christian missionaries also used Hindi as a means of communication in their dealings with the Indian immigrants.

The Hindi spoken by the Indians abroad a century ago was not of the same form as that which has been accepted as the national language of India. Their tongues could be classified as Awadhi, Bhojpuri, Puravi, Brajbhasha and many other dialects. Even in India the pioneers of the national language of India, Raja Shivaprasad, Babu Bharatandu Harichandra and Raja Lakshman Singh had not yet appeared on the scene. The Indians abroad were steeped in the lores of the Ramayana of Tulsidas and the Premsagar that contained the story of Krishna and Radha. The couplets of Alaha-Udhal and Kabirdas were known by rote. The various Hindi dialects generally merged and gave rise to a language of common usage. Thus we have the Natalie Hindi, the Fijian Hindi and the Mauritian Hindi.

INDIANS ABROAD AND EDUCATION

It was the Arya Samaj that first introduced the systematic teaching of Hindi among the Indians abroad. Had this not been done, there was the likelihood of the gradual disappearance of the Hindi language

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among the immigrant Indians. Today several organizations are engaged in furthering the Hindi language, but these efforts are very recent. The Hindu orthodoxy was opposed to women and those who belonged to the so-called lower castes, being taught the Hindi language. In this situation it was the Arya Samaj that established Hindi schools which became available to everybody without any restriction.

The Arya Samaj became equally interested in primary school education which had already been introduced by some of the Christian missions. The government had not accepted the responsibility of providing the immigrant Indians with educational facilities at the time; even where some provision was made for primary education, it was of a very limited nature. The authorities did not consider it necessary that all the children of the immigrant Indians should be educated, with the result that the provision of education for their children became the responsibility of the Indians themselves. The Arya Samaj supported the idea of primary education for Indian children and they spared no effort in establishing schools for this purpose.

The Arya Samaj strongly supported the education of girls. Many girls' schools came into being, both for the purpose of primary and Hindi education. The girls' schools that were built in Nairobi, Kampala and Dar-es-Salaam, became famous educational institutions. In Fiji a D.A.V. Girls' High School was established by the Arya Samaj.

Various other organizations later became interested in education and their contribution in this field has also been remarkable. But recently in many countries, the state has accepted the responsibility for primary and secondary education. In South Africa, for instance, the state-aided system of education still exists but it is definitely on the way out.

VERNACULAR EDUCATION

The need for vernacular education abroad has sometimes been brought into question. It has been argued that their cultural allegiance to India serves no purpose, because the Indians abroad have become the citizens of foreign countries and their livelihood depended on the adaptations that they could make according to the needs of the local conditions.

But, in order not to lose one's identity, the preservation of one's language, religion and culture becomes a matter of paramount importance. It is an accepted fact that the Indians abroad have, in many cases, evolved a new social order; but, even in such a situation, there should be some place for the language, religion and culture of the country of one's origin, for such a heritage cannot easily be forsworn. Language is, in fact, essentially an inseparable part of one's cultural tradition, and it is also a shield that protects a nation from the onslaughts of the destructive forces that are always at work. The mother-tongue actually becomes the immunizing factor in the traditional so-

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HINDI SAHITYA SAMMELAN - BURMA - 1974

L. to R.: Dr Om Prakash (President), Mr Dinanath (President: All Burma Hindu Central Board), Mrs V. P. Singh, Mr V. P. Singh (Indian Ambassador), Mr Aparag, Mr Sipiram

HINDI SHIKSHA SANGH - SOUTH AFRICA

First year Officials (sitting with Pt. Nardev Vedalankar) and students that passed the Rashtra Bhasha Pravesh Examination of Wardha, India (Durban Centre).

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cial system against the percolation of pernicious and irreconcilable foreign elements. A knowledge of the vernacular acts as a restraining influence among those who would more easily become the victims of proselytism.

In the early days of Indian immigration abroad, when the influence of the religious preachers had not yet reached them, the popularity of the Ramayana of Sant Tulsidas helped in the preservation of the Hindi language and the Hindu religion among them. Professor B. Bissoondoyal of Mauritius has also confirmed the role of the Ramayana in Mauritius in preventing the disintegration of the Hindu community. In Reunion which is an island not far from the coast of Mauritius, the entire Indian population of about two hundred thousand Indians are now Christians. The Indian immigrants that went to Reunion were mainly Tamil-speaking and the Ramayana of Tulsidas which is in a Hindi dialect, did not influence these people. They have also become strangers to the vernacular. The position of the Hindus has also followed a similar pattern in Granada, St. Lucia and St. Vincent in the West Indies. There are many thousands of Indians on these isolated islands, that have completely abandoned their language, religion and culture.

INDIAN LANGUAGES

The preservation of the mother-tongue has become an issue of great significance today among the Indians abroad. In many countries the Hindi, Tamil and Gujerati languages are losing their influence among the present generation of Indians. The Indian youth of today, who is in the fourth and fifth generations abroad, have come under the influence of either English, French or Dutch. In the absence of the vernacular in the curricula of the normal school, the Indian children have been deprived of the benefit of learning an Indian language. With the fading out of the older generation that spoke the vernacular, the Indian languages now occupy a very tenuous position. In the course of time the Indian vernaculars will cease to be spoken by the vast majority of the Indians abroad.

South Africa that has an Indian population of about six hundred and fifty thousand, which is the largest group of Indian settlers abroad, excluding Sri Lanka and Malaysia, could be taken as an example to illustrate how Hindi, Tamil, Telegu and some of the other Indian languages have been almost completely replaced by either English or Afrikaans in all public activities, including the market-place. Only in a few households are there still any vestiges of the traditional vernacular languages. Several private schools have been in existence for the purpose of perpetuating the Indian languages which have already lost their importance as either spoken or written forms of communication.

But the position of some of the Indian languages is more favourable in Fiji and in Mauritius, In Burma, Surinam, Trinidad and Guyana,

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the Indian languages have been given some recognition. In all these countries Hindi is the most important of the spoken Indian languages. In Sri Lanka, Malaysia, Singapore and Burma, the Tamil language has gained considerable influence. It is anticipated that the Indian languages will increase their influence in these countries in the future.

Hindi in Mauritius and Fiji, and Tamil in Singapore have been permitted to be used in their houses of parliament. The two languages have also become a part of the normal school curricula. Newspapers and periodicals are being published in these languages. Many writers of prose and poetry in Hindi and Tamil have emerged and there is no fear for the future of the two languages in these countries. But it does not seem that Gujerati, Punjabi, Mahrati and other languages of the minority groups, can be kept alive for long. Indians belonging to these groups should adopt one of the predominant Indian languages in order that they could identify themselves with the Indian settlers. Many non-Indians have also realised the importance of Hindi which has become the national language of India. In the school curriculum it has been accorded the same recognition as Latin and French.

In Kenya, Tanzania, Mozambique, Zambia and Rhodesia Gujerati has become the most popular of the Indian languages. In North Africa Sindhi and Punjabi are spoken by the Indian settlers. In these countries there will always be some Indians, but the future of the Indian languages is most uncertain. The local languages are now gaining currency in everyday life. In the next twenty-five years the Indian vernaculars will almost disappear. Therefore it is of the utmost importance that the Indian settlers should resort to the English language as a means of keeping their religion and culture alive.

Thousands of Indians, including many who are still of Indian nationality, could be found today in America, Canada, England and other western countries. Indians have also settled in Australia, New Zealand, Thailand and Indonesia. These Indians left India to settle abroad as free Indians and on a voluntary basis. Among them there are students, teachers, government officials and people in the various professions. Some businessmen also comprise this group. The major airlines, as a means of travel, have made it possible for the majority of these people to be in regular contact with India. The question of the retention of the home language does not arise in their case. But the problem of the education of the children particularly of the temporary settlers, is an issue of immense significance. The more permanent settlers are satisfied and they have reconciled themselves to the system of education that is available. But no provision exists for the mother-tongue to be taught to the children of these people. In some places private arrangements have been made for the teaching of the mother-tongue.

In the past fifteen years, thousands of Indians have emigrated from India to settle in England. Not many of them belong to the highly edu-

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cated group. The vast majority of their children are deprived of the opportunity of learning the mother-tongue. These people have settled in various parts of the country and in widely-scattered areas with the result that no centralized control could be established for the provision of suitable facilities for the teaching of the mother-tongue. Their children have become almost strangers to their mother-tongue. These children have also come under the strong influence of a purely western culture. The importance of the Indian language and culture has diminished so much among them that the descendants of the Indians who went abroad over a century ago, are in a more favourable position in this regard. The Indians who have settled in the highly pressurized western countries, must take cognizance of this fact and adopt measures that would ensure that their children are not deprived of a birthright, that is, a knowledge of their language and culture.

From the purely academic point of view, it has become evident that certain western universities have made provision for the study of Hindi as a language. This is a matter of great significance in the influence of India abroad. But the people most concerned with the home-language should be the Indians themselves. At the University of London only a few students are engaged in the study of Hindi while thousands of Indian children residing with their parents in the country, do not have the opportunity of learning the language. This is definitely a very unfortunate situation.

In South Africa, at the University of Durban-Westville, provision has been made for the study of Hindi and other eastern languages. But in the past fifteen years only about a hundred and fifty students obtained just a modicum of knowledge of the language mainly for the purpose of satisfying the language requirements towards a degree. Their interest in the language, unfortunately, stops at this stage. Just forty-five students enrolled for an advanced study of the language.

At the same time thousands of children are receiving elementary Hindi education in private schools. But, on the other hand, children, ten times this number, are completely deprived of the benefit of such an education. The lack of an adequate provision for the teaching of Hindi to the Indian children abroad, is a perplexing problem that cannot be solved easily. Perhaps the time has arrived for the organizations in charge of Hindi education in India, the Government of India itself and Indian educationists to give this matter a serious thought with a view to alleviating the situation as it exists today among the Indians abroad.

TEACHING OF THE MOTHER-TONGUE

The teaching of the Indian languages abroad is a complicated issue. The children in these countries have to satisfy the basic requirements of the normal school curriculum. In an ideal situation the vernacular becomes a part of the normal school work. Alternatively, this work is undertaken after the normal school hours by private agencies. In

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Mauritius English and French are taught in the schools. A knowledge of Creole is also essential. The Hindi-speaking people are keenly interested in promoting their language and some provision has already been made for the teaching of Hindi in the normal schools. In South Africa the two official languages are English and Afrikaans which is mainly of Dutch origin. In the private, afternoon schools arrangements have been made for the teaching of Hindi, Tamil and Gujerati. Latin is one of the classical languages offered in Indian schools. There are also several Bantu languages and the ability to converse in one of them is also considered necessary.

It has thus become essential for the children of Indian origin to become proficient in at least three languages if they wish to include their own language in this group. In the countries abroad Indians of different language groups are living together. Every group attaches the same value to its language. It is possible that the Hindi language may ultimately emerge as the most significant among these. Tamil which is also the language of a vast majority has a right to claim an independent existence.

To offer tuition in the Indian vernaculars poses a difficult problem to the system of education in the country. In the first place suitably qualified teachers are not available. The provision of vernacular education in several countries has become a common practice, but teachers with an adequate command of the Indian languages are very limited. This work is invariably left in the hands of the less proficiently qualified teachers. To obtain the necessary number of qualified teachers is not within the bounds of possibility as there are certain legal restrictions to immigration. It has not yet been possible to provide the facilities for the training of local teachers for this purpose. To make private arrangements for a training programme is unthinkable. There may come a time when the training of such teachers could be incorporated in the normal training programme of teachers. Only then can it be said that a very significant advance in vernacular education has been achieved.

There seems to be no likelihood of an adequate salary being paid to the teachers of the Indian languages in the private schools. This arrangement has not received the financial support of the State. The entire cost of such classes has to be met from private funds. As a result of the inadequacy of the salaries paid, teachers of ability and promise are not attracted to the vernacular schools. Most of the vernacular classes have a duration of about two hours in the afternoons. This rules out the possibility of engaging specialist teachers who, in fact, could hardly be found, on a full-time basis. The work is being managed particularly by female teachers. The rate of pay offered to them is far from adequate.

After spending the day at the normal schools, the pupils attend the vernacular schools daily for an additional two hours. In terms of time

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and effort the pupils have to cope with an extra burden. This arrangement is bound to destroy the pupils' interest in vernacular education. The pupils in the senior classes find it most irksome to cope adequately with the high standard of work demanded in the two schools. Vernacular education does not prepare them for a career; its aim is purely of a cultural nature. The outcome is that Indian parents do not encourage their children to attend the vernacular schools; even when they do attend, these children are not obliged to distinguish themselves in anyway, as long as they are satisfying all the requirements of the normal schools. Thus the reason for the indifference to the vernacular schools becomes very clear.

In many of the countries where Indians have settled, it has become extremely difficult to keep the vernacular languages alive. Various organizations are making sincere efforts to provide vernacular education. Not more than four per cent of the pupil-population attend these schools. Of those who do attend about ninety per cent leave after completing the first book of the series. Very few indeed proceed to the higher classes. It seems that such classes have become a waste of time, money and energy.

Even the few pupils who reach the higher standards, are equally discouraged as a result of the absence of an atmosphere, both at home and in the social system, that would encourage the use of the vernacular. The home has changed; the mother-tongue has been replaced by one of the official languages; and local newspapers and periodicals are non-existent in the vernacular. To maintain a good standard of the spoken language in the vernacular, it has become well-nigh impossible. The students who succeed in passing the Kovid (equal to university entrance) in Hindi, begin to despair when they discover that they have no opportunity to apply the knowledge that they have gained to any practical situation in life.

Among the Indian languages, the Gujerati schools are organized and conducted on a more systematic basis. More than ninety per cent of the Gujerati children are able to use the language, both in its written and the spoken forms. From the foregoing account it is clearly evident that it is no more an ordinary task to retain the Indian languages in many of the countries where Indians have settled. Only where the Indian languages have been incorporated in the normal school curriculum, could such languages be kept alive and useful. If the Indian languages could be given a recognition in the other countries as well, it will become a tremendous cultural victory for the Indian settlers abroad.

INDIAN CULTURE

The question of language and religion is closely associated with Indian culture. None of these can be taken separately, without interfer-

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ing with the traditional Hindu way of life. Culture and civilization encompass all aspects of the life of a nation, such as, national customs, the culinary arts, traditional dressing, music, drama, literature, sculpture, architecture and art.

The Indians who have settled abroad have come under the strong influence of western civilization. India itself has experienced the impact of a western way of life. During the British rule in India a western system of education had become established in India, with the result that the scholars and students came under the strong influence of the western tradition in many walks of life. The adaptation of the Indians abroad to the western culture is completely unavoidable. The most pertinent question that occurs to one's mind is: what is the place of Indian culture among the Indians that have settled abroad?

The western way of life has been accepted in every Indian home. In dressing the men have adopted western modes and fashions. In Mauritius the Hindu priests still use the traditional dhoti, but this has been entirely discarded by the priests in other countries. Indian women still take a pride in being attired in sarries at social functions and public gatherings; but the western mode of dressing has become more common among the Indian women who are in employment and even among the housewives who are engaged in the daily chores at home. In the West Indies, Indian women have become completely western in their dressing and sarries are almost out of fashion.

It seems very strange that the Indians abroad have still retained their Indian dishes. As the early Indian settlers were mainly gardeners, they became accustomed to the growing of brinjals, lentils, kidney-beans, calabash, bitter gourd and a variety of herbs. These vegetables are very popular in Indian homes. Rice, dal (pulse), thin bread and herbs are synonymous with Indian dishes. Crisp cakes, chutney, pickles and salads are also very popular. A variety of sweetmeats have become indispensable in Indian homes. The fine art of preparing such delicacies may not be found in every Indian home, but a wide variety is always on sale. The young generation of Indians are becoming accustomed to western dishes; their table manners now conform to western etiquette.

Indian art and sculpture are hardly in evidence beyond the precincts of the temples. The influence of western architecture is also seen in the construction of the temples. Music, songs and drama are significant features of Indian culture. The older generation still shows a sentimental leaning towards all forms of entertainment that are Indian in character. The traditional Indian dances of kathakali, bhartiya nrithyam and manipuri are appreciated widely. The Gujerati folk-dancing and dramas depicting Indian themes are very popular and they have become traditional forms of entertainment. Shastriya sangeet also has its followers; but western music has now captured the interest of the younger generation of Indians. There are the pop fans; at birthday

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and other parties the beat of orchestral music is always popular. Ballroom dancing has become a way of life among the younger generation. Western music has been introduced in all Indian schools and a tremendous progress in this direction is envisaged.

Cultural eisteddfodau which are mainly restricted to children's items are organized regularly by the different language groups of Indians. Adult participation in such a form of cultural activity is less popular. It has become a common practice to transpose the vernacular words into the Roman script.

CINEMA AND RADIO

The cinema is playing an important role in keeping the Indian culture alive abroad. In the absence of Indian films, Indian culture would decline faster. The Hindu culture benefits most significantly from the showing of Indian films. The Hindi films are supported by all the language groups among the Indians. The cinema has become an indirect means of introducing the Hindi language among the entire Indian population irrespective of the language groups to which they belong.

Besides the influence of the cinema on the Hindi language, it also exerts an influence on the various modes of dressing; the design and the use of jewellery; parties, celebrations and weddings also follow the novelties seen on the screen. In music and theatrical performances imitation has become very widespread as hardly any arrangements exist for tuition in Indian music and drama.

The radio has also become a significant source of influence. The programmes of All India Radio are popular. The local radio stations of Mauritius, Fiji, Surinam, Trinidad and Guyana have made adequate provisions for Indian programmes. In South Africa the weekly Indian programme does not exceed two hours; but a great deal of this time is taken up by news items and feature programmes in the English medium.

CULTURAL ACTIVITIES

The cultural activities which are organized include the recital of the Veda mantras, reading of the Gita and the Ramayana, songs, drama, choral singing, hymns, classical music, film songs, ballads, sketches, speeches, debates, dances and the playing of the various Indian musical instruments. Similar activities are found among the Indians abroad in many countries. The Hindi Siksha Sangh of South Africa, under the able leadership of Pandit Nardev Vedalankar, has created a high standard in the annual activities that it organizes. These activities are subdivided into sections, including one for children under ten years of age, two for those who are from ten to fifteen years of age and three for the youth. The programmes consist of inter-regional competitions. This is an annual event of a national character among the

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Hindi-speaking people and it helps promote the Hindi language. The wide variety of items and topics leads to a better understanding and appreciation of the Hindi language. Similar activities have also become popular among the Tamil, Telegu and Gujerati-speaking groups. If activities of this nature could be organized in the other countries as well, they ought to become a means of preserving the language and culture of the various Indian language groups abroad.

FUTURE OF INDIAN CULTURE

The promotion of Indian culture depends on various factors, among which the absence of suitably qualified teachers is the most important. Teachers of Indian songs, music and dancing are not readily available abroad. The individuals who have acquired some proficiency in these fields do not find it a payable proposition to offer their services as teachers. Thus they are not able to make a contribution to the cultural progress of the community. As yet it has not been possible to obtain teachers from India to promote Indian culture.

Indian music, dancing and art are appreciated by the other communities as well, but the persons qualified in these fields are very limited. The cultural attachés of the Indian embassies are expected to play an important role in the promotion of Indian culture abroad. But it is most discouraging to note that the personnel of such foreign embassies are not keenly interested in Indian culture. They are either western in outlook at the outset or are fain to adopt such a way of life and their knowledge of Indian philosophy and culture seems to be minimal. The common man is not interested in the intricacies of a diplomatic mission at the political level; he would be happier to be provided with the benefits of Indian art, literature, religion, philosophy and culture. But to his dismay he discovers that the embassadorial staff is not intended to serve such a purpose.

The officials comprising such a staff are of the belief that India is a secular state and that Indian religion, philosophy and culture are of no significance. Even if they are not Hindus, it is not difficult for those who occupy such responsible positions to be sufficiently acquainted with the cultural heritage of India. How can the importance of Kalidas and the ancient university of Nalanda be considered as of no value? It is said that once a request was made by a group of dramatists to the Indian embassy for some advice about the costumes used in the days of the Ramayana; but the costume recommended turned out to belong to the Mogul period. This gross misrepresentation was most unpardonable.

India has taken a step forward in her foreign relations by establishing a body called the Indian Council of Cultural Relations. This Council ought to serve a very useful purpose. But a case that has come to notice gives some cause for misgivings. A librarian who had no knowledge of Hindi was posted abroad and she was employed in a lib-

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rary that contained books mainly in the Hindi language; and the people of the town were also predominantly Hindi-speaking. It is unbelievable that such a situation could arise.

It has to be stated with some regret that the staff of the foreign embassies of India and many Indian nationals that have gone abroad, do not seem to show the same pride in the cultural heritage of India, as that which is so commonly found among the Indians who are the descendants of the immigrants that went abroad over a century ago. The literate section of the Indian nationals abroad do not seem to be truly loyal to India. After qualifying in India, many Indians find lucrative employment abroad and they are able to share with the western world a life of luxury and comfort. On the contrary, students form China and Japan travel to the western countries to improve their knowledge of science and technology. But each of them regards it as a personal honour to return to his country so that he could be of service to his nation with his newly acquired knowledge. It should become the bounden duty of every citizen to serve his country with loyalty. India needs the services of those who have advanced their knowledge in the universities of the West.

It does not have to be emphasized that the Indians who have settled abroad are in dire need of the enriching influence of India in religion, philosophy and culture. It should be regarded as a moral obligation for the philanthropists, cultural organizations and the news media, both in India and abroad, to encourage the establishment of cultural centres wherever Indians have settled abroad in large numbers.

The Indians abroad cannot but look forward with great eagerness to the message of religion, philosophy and culture that ought to emanate from India for the benefit of those who have left the shores of the Motherland; and not for them alone, but for the good of the rest of mankind.

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PART II

CHAPTER VII

ARYA PRATINIDHI SABHA, SOUTH AFRICA

INCEPTION

The Centenary of the birth of Swami Dayanand was commemorated in India as well as abroad in 1925. In Durban (South Africa) the occasion was marked with a great deal of enthusiasm. A programme of interesting items continued for a week. The first Vedic Conference in South Africa was held during this period and on the 22nd February, 1925, on the day of Shiva Ratri, the Arya Pratinidhi Sabha of South Africa was established.

PIONEERS

The first officials of the Sabha were Pandit Bhawani Dayal (president), Mr B.A. Maghrajh (secretary) - succeeded later by Mr D.G. Satyadeva, Mr P.R. Pather (assistant secretary) and Mr R.K. Kapitan (treasurer). Pandit Bhawani Dayal, who subsequently entered the Sannyasa Ashram, was a distinguished Vedic preacher. He promoted the Hindi language in this country. He also served the Indian community as a political leader. Another person who served the Pratinidhi Sabha with dedication was Mr D.G. Satyadeva. He rendered a lifelong service to the Sabha, mainly as its secretary until his death in 1961. Mr S.L. Singh, who was the president of the Sabha for many years, provided a leadership that was courageous and inspiring. Mr M. Moonoo, the treasurer, spared no effort in the service of the Sabha in its early days. Pandit V.C. Nayanarajh conducted religious services and was the official priest of the Sabha.

Among the other persons who took an active interest in the work of the Arya Pratinidhi Sabha were Messrs Padam Singh, Rughoonath Singh, F. Satyapal, Pt. R.B. Maharaj, R. Deoduth, R. Ramklass, R. Bhooshun, R. Patak, B. Purmasir, B.M. Patel, E. Gooldeep, R. Karpath, B. Bachoo, Vithal Lalla, G. Merhoy, B. Bodasing, R. Bodasing, B. Sookdev Singh, Hans Maghrajh, B. Udit, N. Lallbahadur, S. Mudray, R.M. Naidoo, M.C. Varman, J. Maganlal, B.M. Chaithu, D. Singh, P. Chirkoot, G. Durgapershad, Narain Jeawon, R. Mahabeer, F. Ramlagan and Govan Mani.

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ARYA PRATINIDHI SABHA, NATAL

FIRST OFFICIALS AND DELEGATES (1925)

ARYA PRATINIDHI SABHA — NATAL

OFFICIALS AND MEMBERS — 1950
With Pt. Gangaprasad Upadhyaya and Pt. Nardev Vedalankar

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PROFESSOR BHAI PARMANAND

An appeal was made to Mahatma Hansraj by Lala Mokamchand Varman on behalf of a group of Hindus in Natal, for a religious preacher to be sent to this country. Prof. Bhai Parmanand, M.A., arrived in Natal on 5th August, 1905, as the first Vedic missionary in South Africa. His eloquent lectures in English and Hindi created a religious awakening among the Hindus. He established the Hindu Reform Society in Durban and the Hindu Young Men's Association in Pietermaritzburg. He made a lecture-tour of the towns of Northern Natal, Johannesburg, Pretoria and Cape Town under the auspices of the reception committee which comprised Mr Ramchandra (chairman), Mr B.A. Maghrajh and Mr S.D. Moodley (secretaries) and Mr C. Doraiswami Pillay (treasurer).

SWAMI SHANKARANAND

On 4th October, 1908, Swami Shankaranand, an inspiring figure attired in a saffron robe, set foot on the soil of South Africa. The distance from India had caused religion among the Hindu masses in South Africa to degenerate into varied forms of superstitions and meaningless rituals. The Hindu youth was beginning to be disillusioned with his religion. Swami Shankaranandji was able to create a true perspective of their religion among the Hindus. He urged them to treat their religion with a sense of pride. He stressed the importance of religious lectures, festivals, the sanskars and a study of the Indian vernaculars. He was responsible for making Deepavali, the birth of Lord Rama and the birth of Lord Krishna important dates in the Hindu calendar in this country.

Swamiji was an eloquent orator and he had a good command of the English language. He established religious bodies wherever he found it possible. The Veda Dharma Sabhas which he founded in Durban and Pietermaritzburg followed the principles of the Arya Samaj. His most significant success was the formation of the Hindu Maha Sabha in 1912.

SWAMI BHAWANI DAYAL

Pandit Bhawani Dayal was the first South African Indian to become a religious leader of such influence in this country. He received his early education in India. He had a strong faith in the teachings of Swami Dayanand. He encouraged the formation of Hindi Pracharini Sabhas. He organized a Hindi Literary Conference in Ladysmith in 1916. He was the editor of "Dharma Vir" and the weekly newspaper, "Hindi". He became the first president of the Arya Pratinidhi Sabha in 1925. He served a period of imprisonment with his wife, Jagrani Devi, during the Satyagrah campaign of Mahatma Gandhi in South Africa in 1913.

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His wife died in 1922 and in 1927, while in India, he entered the holy order of Sannyasa. He returned to South Africa as a missionary of the Sarvadeshik Arya Pratinidhi Sabha and toured the country extensively to preach the Vedic religion. His itinerary included Portuguese East Africa (Mozambique) where he was invited by the Bharat Samaj, a body which was established in 1932. He became the president of the Natal Indian Congress in 1938.

For his distinguished service to the Hindi language, the honorary title of Sahitya Vachaspati (D.Lit.) was conferred on him by the Hindi Sahitya Sammelan of Pryaga. He was the first Indian abroad to attain this honour. A similar title was also accorded to Pandit Bissoondoyal of Mauritius.

PANDIT NARDEV VEDALANKAR

Pandit Nardev Vedalankar arrived in Durban on 24th November, 1947. He was brought to South Africa by the Surat Hindu Educational Society, as a teacher of Gujerati and Hindi. He was also required to impart religious instruction. He has served the Society for twenty-seven years. In addition to his normal duties, he has dedicated himself to the work of the Arya Samaj and the propagation of the Hindi language. No Hindu missionary has been able to accomplish a service of such a long duration in this country. He has made a lasting contribution to Hindu religion and culture in South Africa.

Panditji is one of the very able scholars that the Gurukul Kangri has produced. In Surat and Wardha in India he made a significant contribution to the Hindi language. When he arrived in South Africa he became aware of the urgent need for Hindi to be taught on a more organized basis. With the assistance of the Arya Pratinidhi Sabha, South Africa, he was able to establish the Hindi Siksha Sangh. He was the chairman of the Sangh for twenty-five years and during this time the teaching of Hindi throughout the country made tremendous progress.

He has identified himself completely with the work of the Arya Pratinidhi Sabha, South Africa, and his role has been that of a philosopher and a guide. He is the chairman of the Vedic Purohit Mandal. In order to propagate the Vedic sanskars, he has already trained twenty-eight priests who are fully ordained. He is also the chairman of the Veda Niketan which has done very commendable work in disseminating the Vedic religion by publishing a number of booklets. Another remarkable aspect of the work undertaken by the Niketan, under the guidance of Panditji, is the provision that has been made for religious examinations. Panditji has written suitable books for this purpose. These examinations have now been adopted in certain other countries abroad as well.

Pandit Nardev Vedalankar is an eloquent speaker and an accomplisher writer. He has written a number of religious books. Among the books that have become widely accepted are the titles, "Religious

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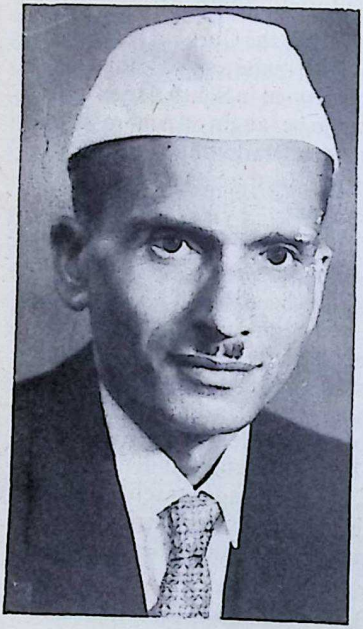
Dedicated Leaders

Mr S.L. Singh

Mr D.G. Satyadeva



Pandit Nardev Vedalankar

Mr Sukhraj Chotai

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Awakening in South Africa", "Aryan Prayer", "Basic Teachings of Hinduism" (parts one and two), "Hindi Grammar" (parts one and two) and "Dharma Siksha Pathavali" (parts one, two and three).

Panditji is dedicated to the cause of the Vedic religion and the Hindi language. He is a respected member of the Indian community.

OTHER VEDIC PREACHERS

As from 1905 many Vedic preachers from India visited South Africa. The stay of these itinerant missionaries has generally been of a few months' duration only.

Pandit Ishwardutt Vedalankar visited South Africa in 1921 and Prof. Yashpal arrived in 1937. Their yogic accomplishments and their outstanding skill in archery greatly impressed the people of this country. Pandit Ishwardutt's daily reading of the Ramayana aroused a considerable amount of interest among the Hindus. Pandit Pravinsingh visited the country in 1922 and 1927. He utilised his musical talent in conveying to the people the message of the Vedic religion. He spent a few years in South Africa as a Hindi teacher and he encouraged the Hindus to perform the Vedic yajna.

Pandit Mehta Jaimini arrived in 1934. He had already gained fame as a Vedic missionary in many parts of the world. He emphasized the importance of the ancient Vedic religion and culture. Pandit Anand Priya accompanied the girl-guides of Baroda in 1934. The display of physical feats and archery by this group was unprecedented in South Africa. They exerted a tremendous influence in enhancing the prestige of Indian womanhood in this country. Pandit Rishiram visited South Africa thrice. By means of his learned lectures he was able to exercise a great deal of influence. He established the Gandhi-Tagore Lectureship Trust for the purpose of inviting religious preachers from India at regular intervals. It is unfortunate that the Trust has not been able to accomplish much in this direction. The other missionaries that visited the country were Swami Manglanand Puri (1913), Prof. Ralaram (1913), Pandit Karamchand (1927) and Dr Bhagatram Sahagal (1929).

The Arya Pratinidhi Sabha, South Africa, obtained the services of some leading Vedic missionaries from India. They contributed to a better understanding of the Vedic religion among the Hindus. Pandit Ganga Prasad Upadhyaya was invited to participate in the Silver Jubilee of the Arya Pratinidhi Sabha in 1950. Prof. Satya Prakash visited the country in 1969 and again in 1973 (as Swami Satya Prakash). On the occasion of the Golden Jubilee of the Arya Pratinidhi Sabha, South Africa, in 1975, Acharya Vaidyanathji Shastri and Acharya Krishnaji were invited. They were widely acclaimed by the Hindu community and they helped to raise the prestige of the Sabha. They created a religious awakening and a renewed interest in the Vedic religion.

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The name of Mokamchand Varman will be remembered as the person who was responsible for inviting Vedic preachers to this country in the early days of the Arya Samaj movement. Bhai Parmanand, Swami Shankaranand and other preachers visited the country at his request.

Some Gujerati Vedic preachers have made their contribution to the Vedic religion in the Transvaal. Among them were Pandit Harishankar Vidyarthi, Pandit Sudhir Kumar Vidyalankar, Pandit Harichandra Arya, Pandit Aroon Kumar Vidyalankar and Pandit Vinaychandra Patel. The preachers that served the Portuguese territory of Mozambique in East Africa were Pandit Ravishankar, Pandit Suman Kumar Vidyalankar and Pandit Matiman Vedalankar. Pandit Haridev Vedalankar is engaged in missionary work in Rhodesia.

AIMS AND OBJECTS OF THE SABHA

In terms of its constitution, the Arya Pratinidhi Sabha has set before itself six main aims and objects, namely, to establish, organize and consolidate the Arya Samajes and other Vedic institutions in South Africa; to foster the work of the Arya Samaj and its ten principles; to disseminate the Vedic religion and philosophy; to promote the art, culture and civilization of India; to encourage the study and use of Hindi and other Indian languages; to protect and defend the rights of Hindus and to concern itself with their spiritual, moral and social upliftment; and to co-operate with other Hindu organizations in matters affecting the Hindu community.

HEADQUARTERS

The headquarters of the Sabha are in Durban at 21 Carlisle Street, where it has its magnificent building comprising an office, a well-furnished council chamber, a large assembly hall (Aryan Hall), a spacious dining hall and two storeys of flats. Alongside the hall a beautiful temple has now been completed.

MEMBERSHIP

There are thirty-six institutions, working according to the principles of the Arya Samaj and Vedic ideals, that are affiliated to the Sabha. Each unit is entitled to a representation of seven members at the meetings of the General Council. All Vedic priests and the donors of two hundred rand and over are life members.

EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

The management of the Sabha is vested in its Executive Council which is served by the six office bearers, ten elected members and three representatives from each affiliated body.

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ARYA PRATINIDHI SABHA NATAL (South Africa)

Rishi Dayanand Birthday Centenary Committee - 1924

ARYA PRATINIDHI SABHA, SOUTH AFRICA

OFFICE BEARERS (1973)

Seated: Mr K. Lalloo (Chairman: Board of Trustees), Pt. Nardev Vedalankar (Chairman: Vedic Purohit Mandal; Chairman: Veda Niketan), Mr Sukhraj Chotai (President), Mr P. Seebran (Vice President), Pt. S. Jugmohan Singh (Vice Chairman: Vedic Purohit Mandal). Standing: Mr S. Satyadeva (Hon. Secretary: Veda Niketan; Sec. Building Committee), Mr R. Boodhay (Jt. Hon. Secretary), Mr R. N. Jeawon (Jt. Hon. Treasurer) Mr S. Rambharos (Jt. Hon. Secretary) Mr D. Bramdaw (Jt. Hon. Treasurer), Mr S. Purmasir (Hon. Treasurer: Veda Niketan).

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COMMITTEES

The Sabha has under its jurisdiction three standing committees, namely, the Building Committee, Veda Niketan (Prachar Samiti), and Vedic Purohit Mandal (Academy of Vedic Priests).

BUILDING PROJECT

The Sabha's property at 21 Carlisle Street was purchased in 1936 for four thousand rand. On 22nd February, 1944, a decision was taken to build a Vedic temple. On 26th February, 1950, on the occasion of the Silver Jubilee of the Sabha, the foundation stone of the Vedic Temple was laid but on account of several difficulties no progress was made until 1954. Then a new plan was passed for a double-storeyed building with a spacious hall and fourteen flats. But the building programme came to a standstill as a determination of the area had not yet been made in terms of the Group Areas Act.

The Sabha obtained an Indian determination (open permit) on its property on 18th July, 1958. Under the dynamic leadership of Mr S.L. Singh, the president, the erection of the first stage of the project commenced on 7th September, 1959. Mr D. Bramdaw helped to raise the finance for this undertaking. In 1959 a group comprising Mr S.L. Singh, Mr N. Jeawon, Mr G. Doorgapershad and Mr Govan Mani collected about three thousand rand from the Transvaal. Another group consisting of Mr S. Chotai, Pandit Nardev Vedalankar, Mr M. Ramawtar and Mr B. Purmasir obtained a total donation of about six thousand rand from the Cape Province.

In 1962 a loan of forty-five thousand rand was raised. While the construction of the flats was in progress, additional financial assistance was readily offered by Mr H. Bodasing, the president of the Sabha at the time. At this stage a gallant band of men from Ottawa gave their voluntary service in the building project under the leadership of Mr S.S. Maharaj. As the total cost of the building was about a hundred and three thousand rand, it became necessary to raise a further loan of nine thousand rand in 1964.

An interest-free loan of about sixty-three thousand rand was obtained from members of the community as a result of the efforts of Pandit Harishankar Ayurvedalankar, Mr G. Baijnath, Mr S. Gangadayal and Pandit Nardev Vedalankar. The Sabha was thus able to redeem its property from the bondholders on 30th June, 1973.

The actual work of constructing the Vedic Temple commenced on 11th October, 1965, but progress was slow. Many problems were encountered, the chief one being the delay in the proclamation of the area for Indian occupation under the Group Areas Act. The building programme of the Sabha gained an added impetus when seven donors supported the Sabha's project with a contribution of five thousand rand per donor. The idea of pillar donors was conceived by Mr S. Cho-

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tai, the President of the Sabha. The names of the donors are Mr B. Gangaram of Clare Estate, Mr K. Lalloo of Merebank, D. Doorgha family of Clairwood, B. Purmasir family of Durban, Bodasingh family of New Guelderland, Mr G. Baijnath of Durban and Mr D. Badul of Glendale. The magnanimity of these donors helped to make the long-cherished dream of the Sabha a reality and the Vedic Temple costing about eighty thousand rand has now been consecrated.

In 1975 the completion of the building project gained momentum when Mr S. Chotai (the President) and Mr G. Baijnath (the Hon. Treasurer) dedicated themselves to this task. The Golden Jubilee of the Sabha coincided with the consecration of the new Veda Mandir by the revered priest, Acharya Krishnaji, of New Delhi, India. The temple has great architectural beauty and it has earned widespread admiration and praise. This is the only Hindu temple that is centrally situated in the City of Durban. The successful completion of the Sabha's building project could be attributed to the efforts of Mr D.G. Satyadeva, Pt. Nardev Vedalankar, Mr S.L. Singh, Mr M. Ramawtar, Mr Narain Jeawon, Mr G. Doorgapershad, Mr P.B. Singh, Mr D. Bramdaw, Mr R. Boodhay and Mr S. Rambharos.

VEDA NIKETAN

The Veda Niketan is a branch of the Pratinidhi Sabha, that concentrates on the dissemination of the Vedic religion by means of suitable literature. A number of religious tracts written by Pandit Nardev Vedalankar have been translated into English. The success of the Veda Niketan is the result of the inexhaustible fund of energy and the outstanding organizational ability with which Panditji is endowed. His persuasive approach has made it possible for financial support to be obtained from the community for the publications of Veda Niketan.

The following tracts on Vedic religion, culture and philosophy have been published: "Religion and its Conception"; "Ideals of Marriage"; "Karma Yoga"; "The Gayatri Mantra"; "Know Thy Lord"; "Maharishi Dayanand"; "Inner Life"; "Daily Prayer"; "Philosophy of the Vedas"; "Source of Happiness"; "Spirit of Religion"; "Introduction to Yoga"; "Hinduism Through the Ages"; "The World and its Purpose" and "Arya Samaj: Its Ideals and Achievement". These tracts have been widely circulated not only in South Africa, but also in Central and East Africa, New Zealand and England. The pamphlet on Hinduism written by Pandit Nardev Vedalankar and translated into English by Mr S. Chotai, has proved to be the most popular of the series. Over fifty thousand copies have been distributed gratis. The "Aryan Prayer" is also in great demand.

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RELIGIOUS EXAMINATIONS

At the moment the Veda Niketan has focussed its attention on religious examinations mainly for the benefit of the Hindu youth. A total of five examinations is envisaged. They are the Dharma Prathama (Elementary), Dharma Pravesh (Junior), Dharma Prakash (Intermediate), Dharma Pravin (Senior) and Dharma Prabhakan (Diploma).

The religious examinations are already available in the first two grades. To enable the students to prepare adequately for these two examinations, Pandit Nardev Vedalankar has written two books, namely, "Elementary Teachings of Hinduism" and "Basic Teachings of Hinduism". These examinations are held twice a year and they are written by thousands of boys and girls. Besides South Africa, examination centres of the Veda Niketan have been established in Rhodesia, Fiji, Mauritius and other places. It has been decided to offer two further grades in these examinations in the coming year.

VEDIC PUROHIT MANDAL (Academy of Vedic Priests)

The Mandal has formulated a code of discipline for the guidance of its members. This body is also entrusted with the task of training students to become priests and preachers. The Mandal works under the direction of Pandit Nardev Vedalankar who has already ordained a number of persons as Vedic priests. Under his able leadership the Mandal has become well-established.

Besides performing the sanskars the members of the Mandal are also required to act as preachers. They have to be in the vanguard of the Arya Samaj movement and they are expected to disseminate the tenets of the Vedic religion.

Some of the priests render spiritual ministrations to the prisoners in Durban and in Pietermaritzburg. Others visit hospitals and private homes and offer prayers for the recovery of the sick. The Shuddhi sanskar (conversion or purification ceremony) is performed and Upanishad kathas are recited whenever the occasion demands.

While performing the sanskars, the Vedic priests are required to wear a gown, the pattern and colour of which have been approved by the Mandal. On behalf of the Sabha and the Mandal the priests issue marriage certificates to the married couples. These, however, do not yet have legal validity.

The aim of the Mandal is to propagate the Vedic sanskars, the yajna, the Upanishad katha and other similar activities that would encourage the people to follow a religious path. The Mandal also hopes to bring about some uniformity in the sanskars, with a particular emphasis on the wedding ceremony.

The Mandal commenced with a special training class for purohits in 1973 and recently fifteen persons qualified as Vedic priests. On the oc-

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casion of the Golden Jubilee of the Arya Pratinidhi Sabha they were formally ordained as Vedic priests by Acharya Krishnaji of New Delhi, India. There were five women in the group and this was the first time that women priests were ordained in South Africa. As the purohits of the Mandal are suitably qualified persons, the demand for their services is increasing.

HINDI EDUCATION

One of the main activities of the affiliated institutions has been the establishment of Hindi classes. The Sabha has always given encouragement to the teaching of Hindi and children's gatherings which are held under its auspices have become a regular feature. Mr R.G. Bhalla's newspaper, "Dharma Vir", and Pandit Bhawani Dayal's "Hindi" contributed much in keeping Hindi alive as a literary and a spoken language.

With the arrival of Pandit Nardev Vedalankar the control, organization and promotion of Hindi became the responsibility of the Hindi Siksha Sangh which was established on 25th April, 1948, at a special Hindi Conference held under the auspices of the Arya Pratinidhi Sabha. Pandit Nardev Vedalankar, under whose direction the Conference was held, was elected as the president of the Sangh. He received the support of Mr Sukhraj Chotai and Pt. B.J. Maharajh, the joint secretaries, and Dr N.P. Desai, a prominent Hindu leader.

During the twenty-seven years of its existence the Sangh has accomplished much which redounds to its credit. Uniformity was brought about in the syllabuses. Hindi classes are conducted at the M.L. Sultan Technical College on a part-time basis and pupils from various parts of the country are prepared for the Hindi examinations of the Rashtra Bhasha Prachar Samiti. They also write the local Prathama examination. The annual eisteddfodau that are held include such items as singing, dancing, sketches, speech-making, short story telling, recitation, recitals from the Gita and the Ramayana and the chanting of Veda mantras. Debates in Hindi are organized annually.

Mr Bal Ganesh who has passed the Rashtra Bahsha Ratna examination, and Mr P. Bagwandin are the joint secretaries while Mr S. Purmasir has seen to the financial aspect as the treasurer of the Sangh for twenty-five years. They have shown considerable enthusiasm in the execution of their duties. Pandit Nardev Vedalankar was the president of the Sangh since its inception and during this long period he proved to be a leader of exceptional ability. His untiring service to the Sangh is worthy of the highest commendation. The office and the library of the Sangh are in the buildings of the Sabha. The present officials of the Sangh are Mr K. Lalloo (president), Mr H.R. Maharaj and Mr P. Bagwandin (joint secretaries) and Mr Bal Ganesh (treasurer).

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ACTIVITIES OF THE PRATINIDHI SABHA

CONFERENCES AND GATHERINGS

The Sabha has held periodic Vedic Conferences at different centres to keep alive the people's interest in spiritual matters. An Aryan Conference was held in 1932 and the first Aryan Youth Conference was organized in 1948. A conference of priests, a Hindi Sammelan and a number of children's gatherings received the attention of the Sabha.

SOUTH AFRICAN HINDU MAHA SABHA

The Arya Pratinidhi Sabha is one of the seven bodies constituting the Hindu Maha Sabha. The representatives of the Pratinidhi Sabha have played an important role in the activities of the Maha Sabha.

FESTIVALS

Every year the Sabha observes the Deepavali, Shiva Ratri, Ram Naumi and Krishnashtami festivals. Both the Ramayana and Gita weeks are organized annually.

SILVER JUBILEE OF THE PRATINIDHI SABHA (1950)

The Sabha published the history of the Arya Samaj in South Africa; invited Pandit Ganga Prasad Upadhyaya, M.A., General Secretary of the International Aryan League; created a new interest in an Arya Vir Dal; laid the foundation stone of the Vedic Temple; aroused a greater interest in the Arya Samaj movement; organized a grand procession; arranged lectures and conferences and performed a Maha Yajna.

AFFILIATION TO ARYA SARVADESHIK PRATINIDHI SABHA, NEW DELHI

Since its establishment in 1925, the Sabha has been affiliated to the Sarvadeshik Arya Pratinidhi Sabha and looks forward to it for guidance and direction on all vital matters, principles and doctrines.

THE TWELFTH ARYAN CONFERENCE IN MAURITIUS

The Twelfth Conference of the Sarvadeshik Arya Pratinidhi Sabha was held in Mauritius in 1973. The Arya Pratinidhi Sabha, South Africa, participated in this Conference with a great deal of enthusiasm; a hundred delegates of the Sabha arrived in Mauritius by air under the leadership of Mr Sukhraj Chotai (the president of the Sabha) and Pandit Nardev Vedalankar. The men and women comprising the delegation enhanced the prestige of the Sabha by their presence at the Conference. The resolutions proposed by the Sabha were given recognition by being accepted at the Conference.

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GOLDEN JUBILEE OF THE ARYA PRATINIDHI SABHA, SOUTH AFRICA

In 1975 the Centenary celebrations of the Sarvadeshik Arya Pratinidhi Sabha coincided with the Golden Jubilee of the Arya Pratinidhi Sabha, South Africa. The occasion marked the completion of the long-awaited Veda Mandir of the Sabha. The two distinguished preachers who were invited from India to participate in the celebrations were Acharya Vaidyanath Shastri and Acharya Krishnaji.

The Golden Jubilee of the Sabha was celebrated from the 5th to the 12th of October, 1975. The Yajurveda-Parayana Yajna commenced in the Veda Mandir on 5th October, 1975, under the leadership of Acharya Krishnaji. The new Veda Mandir of the Sabha was consecrated by Acharya Krishnaji and Pandit Nardev Vedalankar. They were assisted by a group of Vedic priests.

The Swami Dayanand Building and the Aryan Hall were officially opened on this occasion. In order to perpetuate the memory of Mr D.G. Satyadeva who had dedicated his life to the work of the Sabha, the hall on the ground floor was named the Satyadeva Hall; the name of Swami Bhawani Dayal was identified with the building by naming a part of the building the Swami Bhawani Dayal Council Chamber.

In tne afternoon there was a colourful procession comprising a bugle band, four floats depicting the occasion, and the pupils of twenty-five Hindi schools; men and women belonging to the various Arya Samajes also joined the procession; and there was an atmosphere of enthusiasm and gaiety. Thousands of people witnessed the impressive procession. This was the first time that such a magnificent religious procession was held in Durban.

The main function of the day was held in the City Hall in Durban under the chairmanship of Mr S. Chotai, the president of the Arya Pratinidhi Sabha, South Africa. Acharya Vaidyanath Shastri performed the official opening of the celebrations and delivered the main address. The function culminated with a programme of interesting cultural items.

The Maha-yajna continued for eight days, from 2.30 p.m. to 5.30 p.m. each day. Acharya Krishnaji delivered very learned and thought-provoking sermons throughout the week. A programme of lectures was arranged each evening in which the two Acharyas and many religious leaders of the local community participated. On 12th October, 1975, the Yajurveda-Parayana Yajna was completed with the purna ahuti (final offering). Fifteen Vedic priests were ordained on this occasion by Acharya Krishnaji.

During the week of the Maha-yajna about a thousand persons received the sacred thread (yajnopavit) from Acharya Krishnaji. In the afternoon the Sabha assembled to bid farewell to the two Acharyas.

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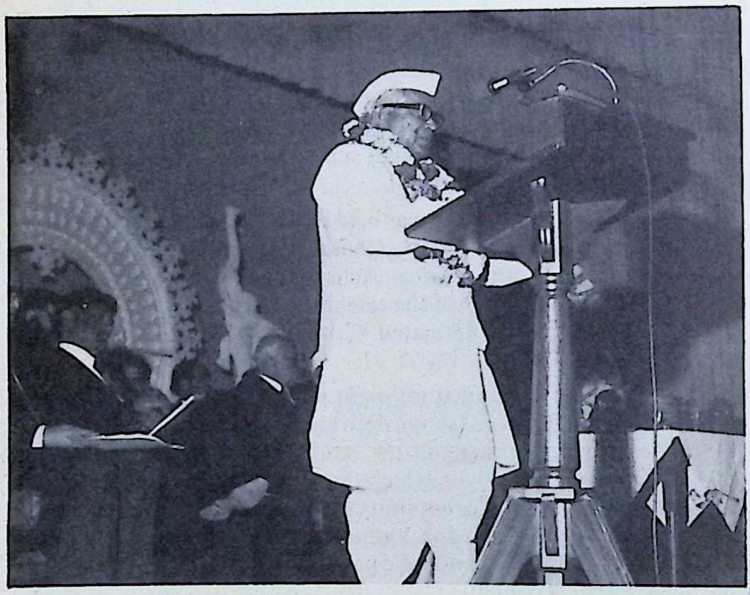
ARYA PRATINIDHI SABHA, SOUTH AFRICA
GOLDEN JUBILEE — 1975

Consecration of Vedic Temple by Acharya Krishnaji — 5/10/75



GOLDEN JUBILEE — 1975

Acharya Vaidyanathji Shastri of India, delivering his address before officially opening the Golden Jubilee Celebrations of the Arya Pratinidhi Sabha, South Africa, at the City Hall, Durban, on 5th October, 1975

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ARYA PRATINIDHI SABHA, SOUTH AFRICA
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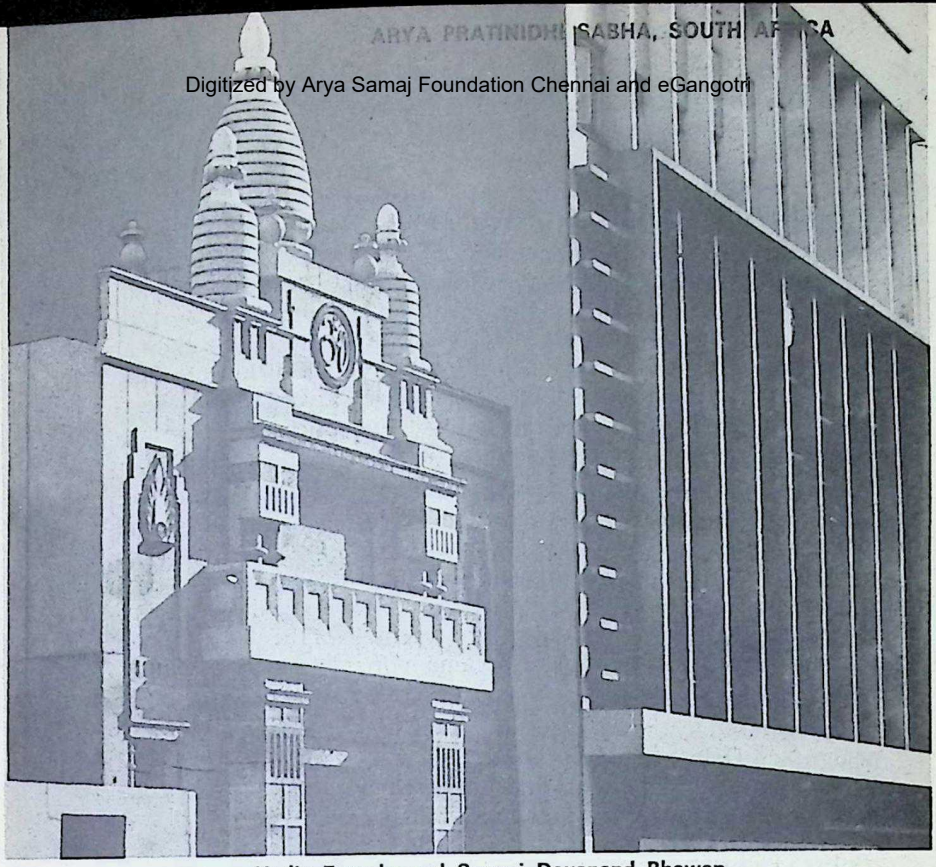

Vedic Temple and Swami Dayanand Bhawan
21 Carlisle Street, Durban

GOLDEN JUBILEE — 1975

Farewell to Acharya Vaidyanathji Shastri & Acharya Krishnaji - 12/10/75

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Thus the Golden Jubilee of the Sabha became a memorable event to the Hindu community and it also gave rise to a new religious awakening.

CENTENARY OF THE ARYA SAMAJ

The year 1975 marks the Centenary of the Arya Samaj. In accordance with the decision of the Sarvadeshik Arya Pratinidhi Sabha, the centenary celebrations of the Arya Samaj commenced on 12th April, 1975. The celebrations held by the Arya Pratinidhi Sabha, South Africa, were officially opened by Prof G.C. Oosthuizen of the Department of the Science of Religion, University of Durban-Westville. The religious leaders that were present on the occasion congratulated the Arya Samaj on the attainment of its hundredth anniversary.

For a period of five months thereafter, the various affiliated bodies of the Sabha participated in the celebrations by marking the occasion in an appropriate manner in their own localities. The officials of the Sabha were always present at such functions. A widespread interest was created in the work of the Arya Samaj. Free Vedic literature was also distributed on these occasions. The teachings of the Vedic religion and the Arya Samaj movement became more widely known.

The culminating function of the Centenary of the Arya Samaj has been organized by the Sarvadeshik Arya Pratinidhi Sabha. It will be held in New Delhi towards the end of December, 1975. The Pratinidhi Sabha, South Africa, has arranged to take a hundred and fifty delegates to participate in this mammoth celebration.

AFFILIATED INSTITUTIONS

ARYA YUVUK SABHA AND ARYAN BENEVOLENT HOME

On 19th April, 1912, the Arya Ballah Mandal was formed at the humble home of Mr D.G. Satyadeva. Under the influence of Swami Shankaranandji the name was changed to Arya Yuvuk Sabha. As the Sabha was the first body in Durban under the banner of the Arya Samaj movement, it influenced the formation of other Arya Samajes. The officials of the Arya Yuvuk Sabha were some of the pioneers responsible for the establishment of the Arya Pratinidhi Sabha, South Africa, in 1925.

From the time of its establishment an important function of the Yuvuk Sabha has been the holding of regular weekly services (satsangs). In 1925 an English school was started in Cato Manor with the help of Mr B.M. Singh. Hindi was taught at this school in the afternoons. Two Hindi teachers, Mr Ramashanker Shrivastava and Mr Pratap Singh, were brought from India. The English school existed up to 1972 when it was destroyed by a storm.

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The Sabha is about to build a Vedic Temple in Chatsworth. It has sent a young man to India to study Vedic theology. On his return he will become a resident preacher. The Sabha is also in the process of creating a Trust for the purpose of propagating the Vedic religion.

Besides Mr D.G. Satyadeva, among the others who served the Sabha were Pandit V.C. Nayanarajh, Mr S.L. Singh, Mr A. Dalipsingh, Mr N. Lalbahadur, Pandit S.A. Naidoo, Mr S. Rambharos, Mr S. Satyadeva, Mrs V. Singh, Mrs S.L. Singh, Mr G. Hulasi, Mr S. Raganath and Pandit B. Purthab.

ARYAN BENEVOLENT HOME

In 1916 Mr Satyadeva came across an old man who was in a neglected state and this made him realise the plight of the destitute members of the community, that were deprived shelter and comfort. He discussed this matter with the members of the Sabha and drew their attention to the ninth principle of the Arya Samaj that every person should see his welfare in the welfare of others. The Sabha adopted a resolution that a home should be built for the aged and the needy.

The staging of Hindi dramas became a useful means of raising funds for such a project. Mr Lalbahadur Nanoo displayed great talent as a playwright and director. He was also an actor of no mean ability. The Aryan Benevolent Home was established in 1921 in Cato Manor.

During the past fifty-four years several alterations and additions were made to the original buildings. The children were completely separated from the aged persons in 1963. Clayton Garden was taken on lease from the City Council in 1965. With the fifty flats that became available the Home was able to diversify its services in respect of the aged group. For the first time accommodation was offered to the aged persons who had the capacity to live on their own at a nominal rental. After prolonged negotiations the Provincial Administration recognized the services of the Home to the chronically sick and granted it the status of a D grade hospital.

In January 1975 there were eighty-seven children in need of care at the Children's Home. The Home for the aged had one hundred and thirty-four persons, of whom forty-one lived independently, twenty-eight were sick and fifty-seven received the benefit of complete social care owing to their helpless condition. A physio-therapy clinic under the supervision of Dr Ramlagan has been provided as an additional service for the aged. From the time the Home was established about one thousand children and two thousand adults have been accommodated for periods ranging from a few years to over twenty years. The Home has a staff of fifty-eight persons and in 1974 the cost of maintaining it was eighty-eight thousand rand.

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ARYAN BENEVOLENT HOME — DURBAN

INMATES — 1947

Inmates of Orphanage

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Plans have just been finalised for the erection of new buildings in Chatsworth. Modern concepts in welfare work have been embodied and building operations are expected to commence early in 1976. The cost of the buildings is estimated to exceed one million rand.

VEDA DHARMA SABHA - PIETERMARITZBURG

In 1908 pioneers such as Mr Gai Singh, Mr Makan Singh and Mr Bhikarie Maharaj established the first Arya Samaj in Pietermaritzburg, the capital of Natal. On the advice of Swami Shankaranand, the name of the Samaj was changed to Veda Dharma Sabha. In addition to the regular weekly services, the Sabha conducts a full-time Hindi school.

The Diamond Jubilee of the Sabha was celebrated in 1969 when Prof. Satya Prakash (now a Swami) of the University of Allahabad was especially invited to be the guest of honour. The Sabha has its own hall (which was officially opened by Sir Radhakrishnan on 7th April, 1939), a Vedic Temple, a crematorium and also a block of flats and shops.

Others who served the Sabha as pioneers were Babu Padam Singh, Mr F. Satyapal, Pt. R.B. Maharaj, Mr E. Gooldeep, Mr G. Jugwanth, Mr D.K. Soni, Mr Ramballi Singh, Mr G.S. Maharaj, Mr D.S. Vather, Mr B. Sunder, Mr B. Ramchurran, Mr S.L. Singh, Mrs F. Satyapal and Pt. B. Bookhan. The official priest and the chairman of the temple committee is Pandit Jugmohan Singh (Vidyaratna).

YUVUK ARYA SAMAJ, CLAIRWOOD - DURBAN

The Samaj was established on 3rd April, 1932. Mr R.B. Bhooshan was the founder of the Samaj. The activities of the Samaj include weekly prayer services, celebration of festivals and the teaching of Hindi. It owns property valued at twenty-five thousand rand. The present officials are Mr G. Baijnath (president), Pandit R.M. Singh and Mr S. Gangadayal (secretaries) and Mr P. Kasiepersad (treasurer).

ARYA STREE SAMAJ - DURBAN

The Arya Stree Samaj (Durban) was established on 24th June, 1942, mainly through the efforts of Mrs S.L. Singh and Mrs A.P. Singh. The Samaj has worked in close co-operation with the Arya Pratinidhi Sabha. The Stree Samaj conducts a Hindi school at the Aryan Hall. At present the Samaj is under the leadership of Mrs Vidyawati Singh who is also the president. The others who served the Stree Samaj are Mrs Prodhun Roopanand, Mrs Yasodha Mooruth, Mrs Saroj Ramawtar, Mrs Prabhawathie Nanakchand, Mrs Shanti Choudree and Mrs B.D. Lalla.

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PLESSISLAER ARYA SAMAJ - PIETERMARITZBURG

The Samaj was founded by Mr F. Satyapal on 30th June, 1924. In the course of time the Samaj had its own property and buildings. Later, under the Group Areas Act, all Indians living in the area were moved to a new Indian settlement.

The Samaj has purchased land in the new area known as Northdale where it intends building an Arya Mandir. The assets of the Samaj exceed fifteen thousand rand. The pioneers of the Samaj were Mr F. Satyapal, Mr Ganga Bishoon, Mr T.N. Bhoola, Mr K. Pardesi, Mr S. Ramdeen, Mr D.N. Bhoola and many others.

ARYA STREE SAMAJ, PLESSISLAER - PIETERMARITZBURG

The Samaj was established on 13th September, 1942. Mrs S. Dookran, with the help of many other willing supporters, did the pioneering work in the upliftment of our women. At present the officials are Mrs D. Bundhoo (president), Mrs H. Arjoon (secretary) and Mrs Bharath Hurkoo (treasurer).

ARYA SAMAJ, MOUNT PARTRIDGE AND DISTRICTS - PIETERMARITZBURG

The Samaj was established on 4th December, 1934, by Mr F. Ramlugan. A Hindi school was started on a small scale but through the generosity of men like Mr S. Bacharam, who donated a piece of land, and others a substantial school building was erected. It has been used for English education and Hindi classes are conducted in the afternoons.

The Samaj holds weekly services and observes all Vedic festivals. Mr G. Bishoon, Mr G. Seetaram and Mr B. Sheonandan were among the pioneers of the Samaj. Pandit O. Shivratan was initiated as a Vedic priest in 1941. The assets of the Samaj exceed fifty thousand rand.

ARYA SAMAJ, RAISETHORPE - PIETERMARITZBURG

Mr T. Baijoo and Mr A.E. Maney were the pioneers of the Arya Samaj, Raisethorpe, that was established in 1935. The Samaj is the proprietor of the Baijoo-Maharaj State-aided Indian School. Hindi classes are conducted in the afternoons and Tamil classes are also held.

In addition to the weekly services, the Samaj conducts cottage services. Many local families have assisted the Samaj. The assets of the organization exceed one hundred and thirty thousand rand.

PIETERMARITZBURG HINDU STREE SAMAJ

The Samaj was established on 4th April, 1943, and it was officially opened by Shrimati Shushilaben Manilal Gandhi (daughter-in-law of

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Mahatma Gandhi). The first officials were Mrs R.B. Maharaj (president), Mrs Krishna J. Singh and Mrs D. Bramdaw. The Stree Samaj has always worked in close co-operation with the Veda Dharma Sabha.

ARYA SAMAJ - PORT SHEPSTONE

The Arya Samaj, Port Shepstone, was founded mainly through the efforts of Pandit Ishwar Singh. It owns a property valued at ten thousand rand and the new buildings of the Samaj are under construction. Hindi classes have been organized and all the religious festivals are observed.

ARYA SAMAJ - LADYSMITH

The Arya Samaj of Ladysmith was established in 1916. The founder was Babu Raghunath Singh. The first Hindi Literary Conference in South Africa was held in Ladysmith. In 1925 the Arya Pratinidhi Sabha organized its second Vedic Conference in Ladysmith. The Samaj celebrated its Golden Jubilee on 19th October, 1969. Prof. Satya Prakash officially opened the celebrations.

In 1921 a school was established for the teaching of Hindi and Gujerati. Mr Vithal Lalla took charge of the school. The present officials are Pandit Laljee Sewgolam (president), Mr B. Vithal (secretary), Mr R. Kalli (asst. secretary) and Mr M.M. Singh (treasurer).

A Stree Samaj was formed in 1969. The officials are Mrs N.D. Singh (president), Mrs I.B. Sangham (vice-president), Mrs M.M. Singh (secretary) and Mrs Naveena Sewgoolam (treasurer).

ARYA SAMAJES - OLD AND NEW

In the past fifty to sixty years various Arya Samajes were engaged in religious work. The teaching of Hindi was encouraged by them. Weekly satsangs had become a common feature. As a result of the displacement that took place under the Group Areas Act, many Samajes had to be disbanded because vast masses of people began to move to new areas. Their resettlement has taken considerable time and religious organizations have just recently begun to be established among them. The funds realised as a result of the disposal of their properties could not be utilised by the same group as the people went to settle in different localities.

The names of some of the old Samajes are: Arya Samaj, Westville; Arya Samaj, Durban; Arya Samaj, Cato Manor; Candella Estate Hindu Sangattan; Arya Samaj, Springfield; Vedic Vidya Pracharak Sabha, Pentrich; Vedic Yuvuk Sabha, Wilgefontein; Nagari Pracharini Sabha, Springfield; Bharat Sangeet Samaj, Durban; Arya Samaj, Dannhauser; and Arya Mithra Mandal, Sydenham.

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There has been evidence of new Arya Samajes being formed in the past few years. Hindi schools, religious classes and weekly prayer services have also been organized. Efforts are being made by the Samajes to have their own buildings. The Centenary of the Arya Samaj has given a new impetus to these organizations.

The names of the Samajes that were established recently are: Arya Samaj, Umkomaas; Arya Samaj, Silverglen; Arya Samaj, Allendale; Arya Samaj, Gandhi Road; Arya Stri Samaj, Ladysmith; Arya Stri Samaj, Overport; Arya Mahila Mandal, Pietermaritzburg; Hindi Vidya Pracharini Sabha Umhlatuzana Township; Ved Dharma Sabha, Howick; Estcourt Hindi Vidya Sabha, Estcourt; Arya Virdal, Pietermaritzburg; Arya Mithra Mandal, Reservoir Hills; Hindi Progressive Society, Sea Cow Lake; and Saraswathie Mahila Mandal, Umhlatuzana Township.

There are other organizations as well that are engaged in spreading the Hindi language and they have worked in close co-operation with the Arya Pratinidhi Sabha, South Africa.

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CHAPTER VIII

ARYA SAMAJ IN EAST AFRICA

ARYA PRATINIDHI SABHA EAST AFRICA, NAIROBI

Indian immigration in Nairobi took place from 1894 to 1901. Indian labour was required for the construction of railways in the country. These Indian immigrants were a group of young persons who had ventured out of India to a foreign land. The impact of a new environment on such immature people who were deprived of the stabilizing influence of the cultural institutions of the Motherland, could well be imagined. There arose an urgent need for religious guidance to be given to the immigrant Hindus in order that the necessary cultural traditions could be established and maintained.

The situation that existed aroused some concern and the Arya Samaj was founded in Nairobi on 5th July, 1903, at the home of Mr Jai Gopal. The inaugural meeting was attended by about forty-five persons. The officials were Mr Indra Singh (president), Mr Kishanchand (vice-president), Mr Badrinath (secretary), Mr Amarnath (assistant secretary), Mr Jai Gopal (treasurer) and Mr Lakshman Dass (librarian), with three executive members, namely, Mr Moolchand, Mr Mathura Dass and Mr Ramrathan. The missionary zeal of Mr Badrinath and the dedication to the cause of the Vedic religion of Mr Mathura Dass are worthy of note. The name of Mr Bisakhi Ram as well could not be left out of account.

On 11th September, 1903, the foundation of the first Arya Samaj building was laid and today there is a seven-storeyed building on this site. A noteworthy feature of the Arya Samaj movement in Nairobi has been the regular anniversary celebrations of the Samaj.

With the gradual increase of the Indian population of Nairobi, there arose the need for educational facilities, especially for the girls. The Arya Samaj started the first school for Indian girls in Nairobi in 1910 at the home of Mr Mathura Dass who also paid the salary of the teacher. No fees were charged at this school until 1920. The Samaj thus did the pioneering work in the education of Indian girls in Nairobi. There are four schools for girls. The Arya Girls' Primary School at Murang'a Road has thirty-five classrooms and the Arya Girls' Senior School in Third Avenue (Parklands) was built at a cost of thirty-five thousand pounds sterling. The Arya Girls' Secondary School and the Arya Boys' Secondary School at Murang'a Road were built at a cost of about sixteen thousand pounds sterling.

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L. to R. Pt. Baisakhi Ram, Mr Mathuradas, Mr Badrinath Arya

A DEDICATED PREACHER
(East Africa)

Pandit Satyapal

DISTINGUISHED PATRON
(Arya Samaj - East Africa)

Seth Nanji Kalidas Mehta

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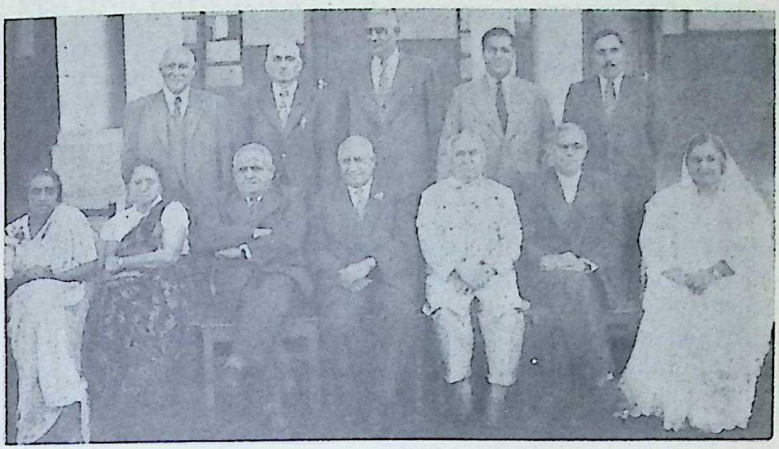

Executive Committee (1952-1953)

STRI SAMAJ - NAIROBI - 1975

L. to R. Sitting: Sushila Khosla, Shakunt Khosla (Manageress), Pushpa Sharma (Sec.), Vedwati Sofat (President), Sawitri Khosala, Saraswati Sethi

Standing: Damyanti Sharma, Shakuntla Bhalla, Avinash Sethi, Saroj Dhall, Sarla Swahl, Shanti Devi Sharma, Nirmala Handa, Vediawati Bahal, Suhag Chada, Sarla Bedi, Agyawati Bhaku.

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The Arya Samaj has participated fully in the activities of the Committee of Crematorium, evening classes for adults, Arya Vir Dal, Arya Virangan Dal, the public library service and in the collection of funds for the purpose of giving financial assistance to indigent persons. It also provided relief during the national disasters, such as earth quakes, famines and floods in India.

ARYA STRI SAMAJ

The Arya Stri Samaj was established in Nairobi in 1919. Although this Samaj began only with a few members, today the membership has increased to more than two hundred and twenty-five in number. The Samaj holds regular weekly meetings and arranges lectures on religious and social matters. Family gatherings are organized for the purpose of furthering the objects of the Arya Samaj. The Stri Samaj owns a fine building at Nagara, with a spacious hall for their meetings.

Through the efforts of the Arya Stri Samaj a nursery school was established in 1949 to serve the needs of the community as a whole. There are one hundred and fifty children at the school today and adequate accommodation has been provided. The other activities of the Samaj include sewing and music classes for women.

CONTRIBUTION OF THE ARYA SAMAJ, NAIROBI

In the field of education the Arya Samaj has made a significant contribution. The admission to the schools of the Samaj has been open to all races. There are about four hundred African girls in the secondary classes and the majority of these students are exempted from the payment of fees.

As early as 1924 the Samaj opened evening classes to give free tuition in English and other subjects (including citizenship) to young Africans. About two hundred African pupils attended the classes which, unfortunately, had to be abandoned owing to circumstances beyond the control of the Samaj.

ARYA SAMAJ IN EAST AFRICA

The Arya Samaj is aware of the changing conditions in East Africa. A strong wave of nationalism is sweeping through this continent. It is a nationalism similar to that which India witnessed soon after Swami Dayanand had appeared on the scene. The members of the Samaj feel that they have a duty towards the land of their adoption. The Samaj believes in fundamental human rights and has declared itself emphatically in favour of a complete cultural, educational and political integration of all the races.

The Samaj is always ready to make a contribution for the upliftment of the African masses. It will never do anything that may retard the social, economic and political progress of Africans. The Arya Samaj will endeavour to fulfil its obligations towards the children of this soil.

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VISITING PREACHERS

Among the distinguished preachers who visited East Africa were Bhai Parmanand, M.A. (1905), Shri M. Shankar (twice), Pandit Poornanand (1908 and 1922), Mangalanand Puri (1909), Pandit Ishwar Dutt (1920), Thakur Pravin Singh (1920), Swami Swatantranand (1921 and 1952), Prof. Ram Deva (1924), Pandit Chamoopati, M.A., (1925), Prof. Sat Varat, Pt. Buddhadev Vidyalankar, Pandit Satyapal (1926, 1928 and 1936), Pandit Madan Mohan Vidyasagar, Swami Anand (twice), Swami Dhruvanand, Swami Akilanand, Prof. Satya Prakash, Dr Amar Singh, Swami Vidyanand (twice), Pandit Usharbudh (twice), Shri O.P. Tyagi, Shri Vaidyanath, Shri Rishi Ram, Shri Ralla Ram, Shri Lakshman Dass, Pandit Balkrishan (1926), Pandit Manishankar (1926), Pandit Nagardas (1928), Dr Bhagatram Sahagal (1928), Shrimati Shano Devi (1929), Mehta Jaimini (1931), Shri Ram Bharti (1931), Shri Karam Chand, Pandit Satyadev Vidyalankar (1934) and Mehta Ramchandra Sastri (1934). The names of the resident preachers are Satyapal (Sidhantalankar), Satyadev (Vedalankar), Dharmandranath (Vedalankar), Devanath (Vidyalankar) and Venaykumar (Ajurvedalankar).

The name of Pandit Satyapal Sidhantalankar among those who made Nairobi the centre of the Arya Samaj movement in East Africa features very prominently. It became a household name among the Hindus and he was a source of inspiration to them. He offered his services to the African people as well by preaching the Vedic religion among them. He lived with them for long periods and used simple food for sustenance. His aim was to create among them an appreciation of the Vedic religion. All sections of the Hindus treated him with the greatest respect mainly because of his sincerity of purpose. He actually became a "father image" among the Hindus of Kenya.

As a preacher of the Arya Pratinidhi Sabha of East Africa, Pandit Gyanchandra served the cause of the Arya Samaj for several years. He visited almost every town and village in East Africa as a Vedic missionary. By establishing a number of religious and Hindi classes and Bal Sabhas he made a fine contribution to the Vedic religion in East Africa.

DAYANAND HALL IN KAHUHO-UHURU HIGH SCHOOL

This hall, costing approximately Shs. 22 000/-, was donated by the Arya Samaj, Nairobi, to the Kahuho-Uhuru High School. The Minister of State at the time, Mr Nyamweya, in paying tribute said that he was "pleased to see that the Arya Samaj and Stri Samaj of Nairobi had given a hall to the school".

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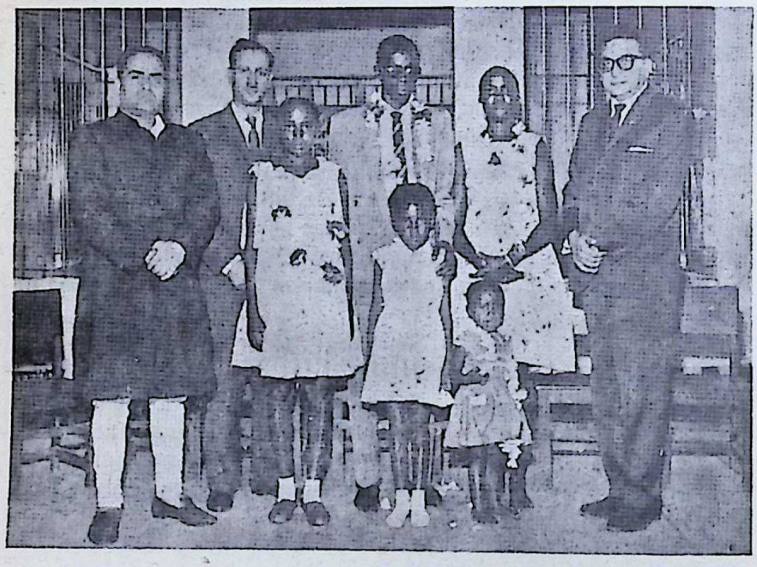
ARYA SAMAJ - MOMBASA

Yajnashala

DAYANAND HOME - NAIROBI



Extreme Left: SHRI O. P. TYAGI, M.P.
Secretary: Sarvadeshik Arya Pratinidhi Sabha, New Delhi, India - on tour of East Africa

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ARYAN CLUB

This Club is run under the patronage of Arya Samaj, Nairobi, and it has gained a good reputation. The membership of the Club is open to the public, irrespective of colour or creed. In 1973 all the players, with the exception of three who represented the first African-Asian-Latin American invitation table tennis tournament held in Peking, were selected from the members of the Club.

ARYA SAMAJ DISPENSARY

A free public dispensary is being run by the Arya Samaj. About two hundred and fifty patients per month are treated at this dispensary in addition to the free medical services available to over a thousand students in the Samaj schools. The serious cases are transferred to the Government hospitals after being treated in the dispensary.

PROPERTIES OF THE ARYA SAMAJ

The properties owned by the Arya Samaj, Nairobi, include Parklands Secondary School, Ngara Girls' Secondary School, Ngara Boys' Secondary School, Ngara Primary School, M.P. Hall, S.D. Ashram - Shardhanand Ashram (Dayanand Home), Vedic House, Nursery School, Puri Bhavan (Arya Stri Samaj Hall), Dispensary, Library and a vacant plot at Eastleigh. The total value of the properties of the Samaj is about ten million Rupees. Mr S.D. Bhardwaj is the president of the Samaj at the moment.

ARYA SAMAJ - MOMBASA

The Arya Samaj, Mombasa, was formed in 1904. The Samaj has a temple which is situated in Mwembe Tayari Road, Mombasa. There is also a Bal (Youth) Sabha. Weekly services are held. The properties of the Arya Samaj include the building in town; the main building in Mwembe Tayari Road comprising an assembly hall, a yajna shala, a nursery school, a rest house and a school; the Aryan Sports Club and pavillion; and a building in Nairobi jointly owned by the Arya Pratinidhi Sabha, Eastern Africa, and Arya Samaj, Mombasa.

GENERAL

The Arya Pratinidhi Sabha, Eastern Africa, started functioning in 1922. Weekly services are a common feature of the Arya Samaj movement in East Africa. Every big city has a girls' school. Bal Sabhas are conducted. Hindi classes are organized. Religious festivals are observed and people of other faiths and of all races are invited. Free religious books are distributed. Many Africans have already converted to Hinduism. In the "Dayanand Home" for orphans in Nairobi several African children are being brought up as Hindus. They recite the Aryan prayers and are getting accustomed to vegetarian meals. They are being given a religious education and are clothed and fed very well. The Indian population in East Africa is served by nineteen Arya Samajes.

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ARYA PRATINIDHI SABHA TANZANIA

In East Africa Tanganyika and Zanzibar were two separate countries. After 1960 several countries in East Africa gained their independence. These two countries then formed a single political unit under the new name, Tanzania. Prior to this Kenya, Uganda, Tanganyika and Zanzibar were served by a single Arya Pratinidhi Sabha of East Africa. The Arya Samaj movement was already established in Tanganyika and Zanzibar at the beginning of this century. But after independence a separate Pratinidhi Sabha was formed in Tanzania on 19th July, 1974.

ARYA SAMAJ - DAR-ES-SALAAM

Mr Karsandas Dwarikadas was responsible for the founding of the Arya Samaj, Dar-es-Salaam. The generous donation of Mr Mathuradas Kalidas Mehta made it possible for the Arya Samaj to construct a double-storeyed building. This project cost thirty thousand Rupees and it became an impressive edifice in Dar-es-Salaam. The Samaj emphasized the importance of the education of girls. It established the Devkuwar Arya Girls' School where, in addition to English, the pupils were taught Hindi and Gujerati. Provision was also made for religious instruction. Later this school was replaced by the D.A.V. Girls' Primary School and in addition the Dayanand-Anglo Secondary School came into being.

It had become a matter of routine for the Vedic preachers touring East Africa to visit the Arya Samaj of Tanganyika. The Arya Samaj Dar-es-Salaam paid the expense and invited a renowned scholar of the Gurukul Kangri, Pandit Dilipkumar, as a Vedic preacher. It was possible for the Panditji to spend some years in the country. As a Gujerati-speaking preacher he had endeared himself to the Gujerati community.

In Tanzania, in additon to Dar-es-Salaam, Arya Samajes have been established at Tabora, Mwanza and Tanga. There was a wide-spread interest in religion and mother-tongue education. As from 1960, the changing political situation in East Africa made the life of the Indian settlers seem insecure and uncertain. But a feeling of reassurance has now been established among them and they are confidently looking forward to a brighter future.

ARYA SAMAJ - TANGA

The Arya Samaj at Tanga was formally established on 2nd February, 1947, for the purpose of uniting and serving the Hindu community on the basis of the teachings of Maharishi Dayanand Saraswati as contained in the Satyarth Prakash (Light of Truth). The pioneers of the movement were Mr Sant Ram Verma, Mr Ram Singh Chohan, Mr C.C. Jamindar, Mr M.K. Patel, Mr S.R. Jethi and Mrs Damyanti

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Ben Jatania. At first they started with weekly havans at the residence of Mr Jethi. The others who soon became interested and joined them were Mr A.M. Acharya, Mr G.M. Yagnik, Mr G.V. Desai and Miss Sushila Ben R. Chohan. The zeal and enthusiasm of the members gave rise to a diverse trend of activities in the social and religious fields. The first officials of the Samaj were Mr S.R. Verma (president), Mr A.M. Acharya (vice-president), Mr S.R. Jethi (secretary) and Mr G.M. Yagnik (treasurer).

The devotion and service of the Samaj attracted such generous persons as Mr Monji Ramji, Mr Jagjivan Damodar Kanji and Pragji Bhai Jatania who also served as president of the Samaj for three years. Under these leaders and with the untiring work of Mr S.R. Jethi, who had the distinction of serving as the secretary for twenty years, the progress of the Arya Samaj was rapid and spectacular.

After some time the Samaj purchased a plot of land and with the support of Mr Monji Ramji, Mr J.D. Kanji, the Arya Pratinidhi Sabha of Nairobi and many other supporters, a building was erected in the name of the Samaj. The Arya Samaj also concentrated on providing Hindi education both to boys and girls. In this sphere many women members offered their free services.

In addition to holding weekly satsangs, the preachers who visited East Africa were always invited to deliver religious lectures in Tanga. The Samaj has emphasized the importance of the Vedic sanskars. It does not believe in colour or caste and its motto is "Krinvanto Vishwamaryam" (Make the whole world Aryan). The Samaj supports the "Dayanand Home" for orphans in Nairobi. Bursaries are awared on merit to deserving pupils. The Samaj library has a collection of over one thousand and five hundred books in English, Hindi, Gujerati and Sanskrit.

The Arya Samaj (Tanga) has worked in close co-operation with the Hindu Mandal, the Bhajan Mandali and the Mahila Mandal during the twenty-five years of its existence.

ARYA SAMAJ - ZANZIBAR

Zanzibar is a small island along the coast of East Africa and the place is famous for its export of cloves. Indians traded with the East coast of Africa from ancient times. In the nineteenth century the Arab Sultans ruled Zanzibar which was under the control of the British Government. After 1960 there was a rapid political change and a new order emerged. The traders in Zanzibar were mainly Indians and Arabs. At the time of transition to African rule, the future of these traders was placed in jeopardy. They suffered considerable hardship and lost a great deal of their property. Zanzibar which was entirely Indian in character at one time has undergone a complete transformation and only a few Indian families have now been left on the island.

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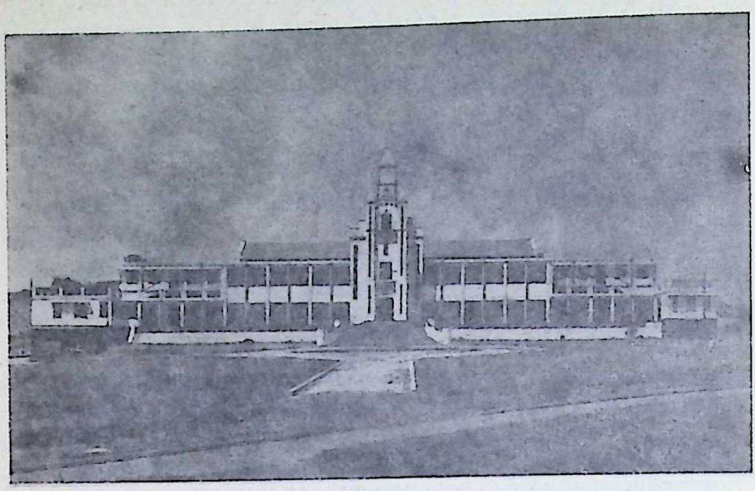
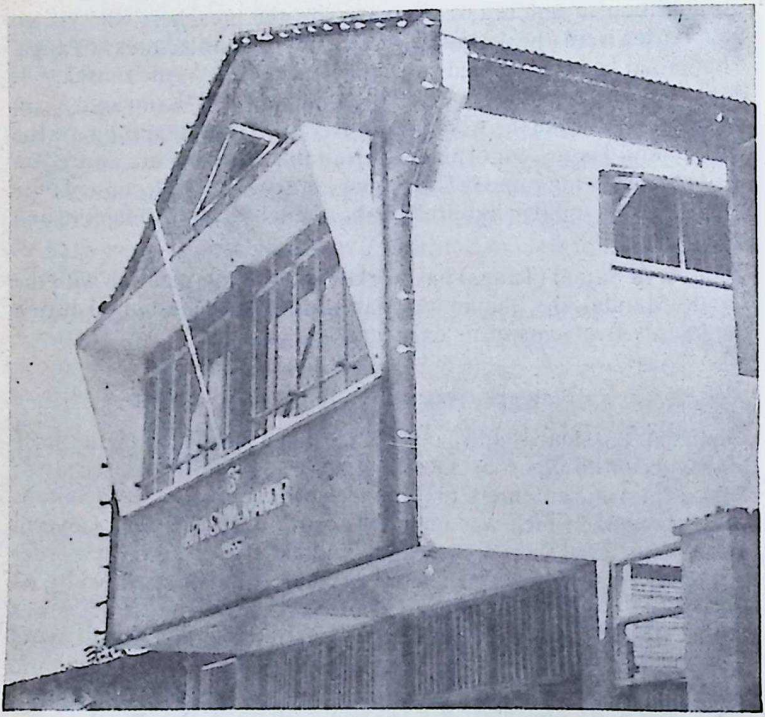
ARYA SAMAJ - KAMPALA - UGANDA



Arya Girls' College



ARYA SAMAJ - TANGA, TANZANIA **Arya Samaj Mandir**

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The Arya Samaj was established in Zanzibar in 1907. Mr Bhanjee Dayal, Mr Ravji Nanji and Mr Keshevlall Himmatpura were some of the pioneers. The Samaj constructed a double-storeyed building and for almost fifty years it took over the responsibility for the religious, cultural and educational activities among the Hindus in Zanzibar. The Samaj also owned a visitors' lodge. It built a girls' school and a library with a reading room was also made available. Regular prayer services and the celebration of festivals created a greater awareness among the Hindus of their cultural heritage. The Vedic preachers who visited East Africa always included Zanzibar in their itinerary.

ARYA SAMAJ IN UGANDA

At one time Uganda was the centre of the activities of the Arya Samaj in East Africa. Pandit Purnanand established the Arya Samaj in Uganda in 1908. After 1920 the work of the Samaj gained considerable momentum. In 1929 Mr Sunder Singh donated a plot of land to the Samaj and a magnificent building was constructed. Mr Nanji Kalidas Mehta made a generous contribution towards the cost of this building. Mehtaji is an ardent follower of the teachings of Swami Dayanand. Several Samajes in East Africa received magnanimous donations from Mehtaji.

The political revolution of the past decade affected the Indian population adversely. When President Idi Amin assumed power in Uganda the Indians were altogether uprooted and there was a mass exodus of these people to Britian and other parts of the world. The work of the Arya Samaj in Uganda has come to an end and it has been dispossessed of its properties that were worth many lakh Rupees.

ARYA SAMAJ IN MOZAMBIQUE, RHODESIA AND ZAMBIA

Indians have also settled in Mozambique, Rhodesia and Zambia and the influence of the Arya Samaj has spread to these centres. Swami Bhawani Dayal Sannyasi spent some time in Mozambique as a Vedic preacher. The Hindus of the capital city of Lourenco Marques were deeply impressed by the missionary zeal of Swamiji. They formed the Bharat Sabha in 1933 on the basis of the Vedic teachings. A Veda Mandir was built in 1937. Pandit Ravishankar Vidyalankar, Pandit Sumanthrai Vidyalankar and Pt. Matiman Vedalankar were engaged in religious work in Lourenco Marques for a number of years.

In 1962 the diplomatic relations between India and Portugal became strained as a result of the annexation of Goa, a Portuguese territory, by India. The Indians living in the overseas Portuguese territory of Mozambique were victimized and the thousands of them who were expelled lost their possessions. The work of the Bharat Sabha also came to a standstill at the time.

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The Vedic preachers who visited East Africa generally included Rhodesia and Zambia in their itinerary. Pandit Haridev Vedalankar spent some years in Bulawayo as a teacher. He introduced the Vedic sanskars among the Hindus.

About eight per cent of the Indian population of East Africa are Gujeratis and in the towns in the interior they number about ninety per cent of the Indian population. In Central Africa there are hardly any Punjabis or Hindi-speaking Indians. The Arya Samaj did not become a clearly defined movement in either Rhodesia, Zambia or Mozambique. The Gujeratis are very devout Hindus and they have always supported religious organizations. They gave their unstinting financial assitance to the Arya Samaj as well although they did not become strong adherents of this movement. In East Africa the Punjabis and the Hindi-speaking Hindus were the staunch supporters of the Arya Samaj.

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CHAPTER IX

ARYA SAMAJ IN MAURITIUS

ISLAND OF MAURITIUS

Mauritius is one of the Mascarene Island in the Indian Ocean,

Mauritius is one of the Mascarene Islands in the Indian Ocean, about five hundred and fifty miles east of the Malagasy Republic. It is of volcanic origin and is practically surrounded by coral reefs. It has an area of seven hundred and twenty square miles, covering a distance of thirty-nine miles in one direction and twenty-nine miles from the east to the west coast. The tropical climate is tempered by trade winds. The country is noted for its sugar-cane plantations. Port Louis is the capital. Mauritius has a population of six hundred and thirty-nine thousand people.

The island was first discovered by the Portuguese in 1528 and the Dutch East India Company occupied it in 1598. From 1715 to 1810 it was governed by France. In 1910 it became a British Colony. On 12th March, 1968, it was given a greater measure of autonomy.

INDIAN IMMIGRATION

Indentured Indian labour was introduced in Mauritius in 1835. These immigrants belonged mainly to the uneducated peasant groups living in the villages of India. The Hindu religion they followed was of the unenlightened and superstitious type. Some of them belonged to certain bhakti cults and religious leadership took time to emerge. The new Hindu settlers came under the strong influence of the proselytizing agencies of the Christian Mission.

ARYA SAMAJ IN MAURITIUS

In 1897 a regiment of Bengali soldiers came to Mauritius in the service of the British Government. Among them there were some soldiers who were interested in the teachings of Swami Dayanand. In 1902, before they left Mauritius, a copy of the Satyarth Prakash and another of the Sanskar Vidhi were handed to Mr Bekarilall Singh. Sometime later he made these books available to Mr Lala Khemlall who was deeply concerned with the deteriorating position of the Hindu religion in Mauritius. He worked in close co-operation with Mr Goorooparsad Duljeet to improve the position of the Hindu community. The first Arya Samaj was established at Curepipe Road in Mauritius in 1903. The Arya Samaj was naturally not welcome to those who were steeped in Hindu orthodoxy. But despite the early setback of the Samaj it soon gained popular support. The emphasis it placed on education and social reform infused a new spirit among a large body of the Hindus at a time when they were being stifled by religious bigotry and the caste system.

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When Doctor M. Manilall Barrister arrived from India in 1907, he persevered to consolidate the work done in the religious field. He published a regular Hindi magazine which aroused the interest of the people in their language and religion. It was not until 1st April, 1910, that the Arya Samaj was established once again in Curepipe Road. Among the leading members of the Samaj were Mr Lala Khemlall, Mr Goorooparsad Duljeet, Mr Harnam Singh, Mr Damodar Ramdin, Mr Tapasviji, Mr Jugmohan Gopal and Mr Ramkelawan Boodhan.

On 8th May, 1911, an Arya Samaj was formed at Port Louis. The prominent members of this Samaj were Mr Gayasingh, Mr Ramjilall, Mr Madholall, Mr Gopichand Chetar, Mr Lekhram Singh, Mr Khersingh, Pt Jaganath and Pt Ram Manohar.

The two Samajes combined to establish the Arya Pratinidhi Sabha of Mauritius. The officials of the Sabha were Mr Lala Khemlall (president), Mr Goorooparsad Duljeet (secretary) and Mr Khersingh (treasurer). Pt Jaganath was appointed as the preacher. Pt Ramawadh Sharma also became a preacher and he was given the responsibility of editing the "Arya Patrika". Swami Mangalanand Puri and Pt Lakshmandutt Panday spent some time in Mauritius as Vedic preachers.

The Arya Samaj in Mauritius received the greatest impetus when Dr Chiranjiva Bhardwaj, F.R.C.S., M.R.C.P. (England), arrived with his family on 15th December, 1911. Doctor Manilall Barrister was married to the daughter of Mr Pranjivan Jagjivan Mehta, a citizen of Rangoon. Mehtaji was a patron of the Gurukul Kangri. Dr C. Bhardwaj had already gained fame in Rangoon as a Vedic preacher. Doctor Manilall Barrister (the appellation 'doctor' being an honorary one accorded by the people) persuaded Dr Bhardwaj to establish his medical practice in Mauritius where the Hindus were in need of an able religious reformer. He was well-versed in Sanskrit and Hindi. He was ably supported in his religious work by his wife, Mrs Sumangli Devi Bhardwaj. His presence in Mauritius lent dignity to the Indians who had settled on this island as very humble immigrants from India.

Dr Bhardwaj was an ardent follower of the Vedic dharma. During his stay in Mauritius, he served the Arya Samaj movement with dedication. He was advised by the local orthodox priests to refrain from active participation in the work of the Arya Samaj. But Dr Bhardwaj who had come thousands of miles away from home to serve the cause of this movement, could not be deterred from carrying out his mission. He was fully aware that the work of the Arya Samaj, which he had espoused, involved making personal sacrifices. He made a significant contribution to the progress of the Arya Samaj in Mauritius. Arya Samajes were soon established at places where Hindus had settled in large numbers, such as Vacoas, Triolet, Labourdonnais, Pamplemousses and Riviere des Anguilles.

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He took charge of an evening Hindi school and also travelled to the local villages to spread the message of Vedas. His speeches were inspiring, logical and authoritative. He condemned superstitious beliefs, the caste system and other practices that were not in keeping with the teachings of the Vedas. His wife who generally accompanied him during his lectures, exerted a strong influence on the Hindu women. She placed before them the Vedic ideal of Hindu womanhood and urged them to follow the path of literacy.

Through his efforts the Arya Paropkarini Sabha which was established in 1912 was registered as a religious body. The original name, Arya Pratinidhi Sabha, was not acceptable for official recognition. The headquarters of the Sabha is at Port Louis where the Arya Bhawan stands today as a living monument. The purchase of a property was the initial step taken by the Sabha. In order to ensure the advancement of the Arya Samaj in Mauritius, Dr Bhardwaj sent a young man, Kashinath, to India for the purpose of religious training.In addition, and mainly at the request of the Arya Samajes of Mauritius, Dr Bhardwaj persuaded the Arya Pratinidhi Sabha of Punjab, to send a preacher to Mauritius.

Thus in 1914 Swami Swatantranand arrived and a few months later Dr Bhardwaj returned to India. Swamiji helped to prevent any disruption in the work of the Arya Samaj movement by his very able leadership. He was a person of profound learning with a remarkable gift of oratory. He was highly respected by all sections of the Hindu community. He believed in the value of education and encouraged the learning of Hindi. He departed from the country in 1916. In the meantime, the "Arya Patrika", which was a newspaper in Hindi and the official organ of the Arya Paropkarini Sabha, had become well-established.

Pandit Kashinath Kistoe had already returned home by this time after having spent six years in India where he received adequate training as a Vedic missionary. He succeeded in filling the void that was created by the departure of Swami Swatantranand, and he made his service to the Arya Samaj a life-long mission. He became the editor-in-chief of the "Arya Patrika". He was able to counter the attacks of the orthodox Hindus with scholarly arguments. Other local preachers who contributed to the work of the Arya Samaj were Pt Shivsankar, Pt Basudeo, Pt Jagnandan and Pt Aniroodh Sharma. Mr Ramkelawan Boodhan who was a staunch member of the Curepipe Arya Samaj, returned to Mauritius in 1916 after qualifying as a barrister.

In 1923 a religious debate between the pandits of the Arya Samaj and a puranic priest was scheduled to take place. But the last-minute refusal of the puranic pandit to participate in the debate confused the orthodox section of the Hindus. Pt Kashinath Kistoe's impassioned speech on this occasion in support of the Vedic dharma, won many more adherents for the Arya Samaj.

It was realised that an enduring basis could not be created for

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the furtherance of Vedic teachings without the younger generation being given instruction in the Hindi language. The establishment of Hindi schools thus engaged the attention of the Arya Samaj. A full-time Hindi school was organized by Pandit Kashinath Kistoe in Vacoas. It was conducted by Pandit and Mrs Kashinath Kistoe and both of them worked without any remuneration. This school became the Arya Vedic School in 1924 and it still bears that name. Mr N. Saddul who was an enthusiastic Arya samajist, abandoned his secure position as a teacher in the Curepipe Government School to become the first head teacher of the Aryan Vedic Primary School.

The Arya Samaj opened two other primary schools subsequently, namely, the Saraswathi Aided School at Ecroignard and the Arya Vedic School at Laventure. It also established the D.A.V. College in Port Louis. The Arya Samaj now conducts about two hundred evening Hindi classes and about sixty among them continue to the secondary level. The dedication of the teachers engaged in teaching at these schools is worthy of praise.

The year 1924 could be regarded as the golden year of the Arya Samaj in Mauritius. The Arya Paropkarini Sabha celebrated the centenary of the birth of Swami Dayanand Saraswati with all the pomp and fervour befitting the occasion.

Mr Ramsaran Moti served as the president of the Sabha with distinction for many years. He took the initiative and invited to Mauritius on the occasion of the centenary celebrations Pt Mehta Jaimini, B. A., LL. B., a retired advocate who had become a Vanprasthi. His proficiency both in Hindi and English made him eminently suitable as a preacher abroad.

The two-day centenary celebrations culminated on 24th February, 1924, when Pt Mehta Jaimini delivered an inspiring address on the life of Swami Dayanand Saraswati. There was a very representative gathering of people from all parts of Mauritius. The presiding chairmen at the two functions were the notable residents of Mauritius, Mr Jugoot Rai Trivedi and Mr Rajkumar Gajadhar, respectively. The celebrations evoked the very willing co-operation of the orthodox Hindu community as well. It was the personality of Pt Mehta Jaimini that had brought the Hindus of all shades of opinion together on this occasion. Mehtaji founded the Arya Kumar Sabha in Port Louis. This body obtained the membership of many western-orientated young Hindus. By 1924, two local residents, Pt Ramlakan and Pt Benimadho, had returned to Mauritius after having studied in India. They became preachers of the Arya Samaj.

Soon negotiations took place and Swami Vijayanand Saraswati, a Vedic scholar of eminence, arrived in February, 1926. He showed great zeal and energy in his missionary work. The use of a slide projector by him, increased the effectiveness of his lectures. Another innovation that he introduced was the "nagar kir-

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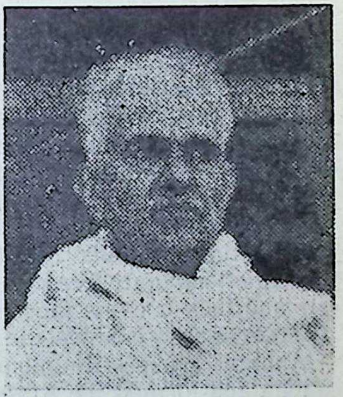
Pt. Kashinath Kistoe

Mr Satcam Boolell, M.P.

Mr Mohunlall Mohith



Pt. B. Bissoondoyal

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tan," meaning, a village procession. He organized such processions in Mahebourg, Rose Belle and Bon Accueil and they were very successful. The "shuddhi" sanskar which he started gave hope to those who wished to adopt the Hindu religion. He left Mauritius in 1931 having served the cause of the Vedic religion with great devotion.

The new enthusiasm which had arisen in the work of the Arya Samaj in Mauritius in 1927 brought into being another body, the Arya Pratinidhi Sabha. Mr Gopichand Chuttur became the president; Mr Goorooparsad, one of the founders of the Arya Samaj in Mauritius served as the secretary; and Mr I. Moothien was the treasurer. These office bearers were ably supported by other veterans of the Arya Samaj, such as, Mr Mohunlall Mohith, Mr Mahesh Sardar, Mr B. Hanuman, Mr R. Pooran and Dr J. Seegobin. Among the missionaries were Pt Kashinath Kistoe, Pt Aniroodh Sharma, Pt Ramrathan and Pt Harikrishna Visharad. The Arya Pratinidhi Sabha obtained the recognition of the International Aryan League in New Delhi and made a tremendous progress in a short time.

Pt Benimadho, Sutteeram joined the Arya Paropkarini Sabha. He had returned home after having studied Sanskrit and the Vedas for several years in India. He distinguished himself at the Lallmatie in 1932 when he represented the Arya Samaj in a religious debate and opposed very successfully the contentions of the orthodox Hindu priests.

Among the very able men that supported the Arya Pratinidhi Sabha was Pt Gayasingh. His influence helped to a great extent in improving the financial position of the Sabha. In 1933 Pt Kanhyalall Mishra who was invited by the Pratinidhi Sabha spent six months in Mauritius. His preaching sessions were attended by thousands of devotees, including the orthodox Hindus.

The fiftieth anniversary of the death of Swami Dayanand was observed by the Paropkarini Sabha in 1933. This occasion coincided with Deepavali and thousands of people participated in the special service that was dedicated to the life of Swami Dayanand. It was a momentous and a memorable occasion. Mr R. K. Boodhun, Barrister-at-Law, presided on the occasion. A "Nagar Kirtan" was also held and Mr S. Ghooran, M.B.E., presided. The Arya Pratinidhi Sabha, which was formed in 1927, marked the occasion by establishing the Shradhanand Bhawan which was officially opened by Dr J. Seegobin. Mr Bhimbhai Kala presided at the function. It was unfortunate that the Paropkarini Sabha and the Pratinidhi Sabha could not unite to mark the occasion. But the functions that were held stirred the consciousness of the people and they became more interested in the Hindi language and the role of the Vedic teachings in the life of the Hindu community.

Another group of members broke away from the Paropkarini Sabha and formed the Arya Ravi Ved Pracharini Sabha in 1934. But in the midst of the divisions that had arisen, the work of the

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Arya Samaj was pursued vigorously and the illiterate, the humble and the helpless among the Hindus derived a great deal of benefit. When the splinter groups had created a state of disintegration within the Arya Samaj movement, Mr Sewnarain Ramlalla became the president of the Arya Paropkarini Sabha and he endeavoured to unite the dissenters. He achieved some measure of success in his efforts during the period of intense schism between 1927 and 1934.

Thereafter, from 1935 to 1950, the work of the Arya Pratinidhi Sabha and the Arya Ravi Ved Pracharini Sabha was in ascendance, while the Arya Paropkarini Sabha continued to work at a subdued pace without the spirit of rivalry. The outbreak of the Second World War brought about some disruption in its wake. But the number of evening Hindi classes increased steadily. Budding writers of prose and poetry in Hindi seemed to emerge. The Arya Samaj forged ahead with the conviction that its work was based on the solid foundation of selflessness that was meant to build a society of honest and God-fearing people.

The Sarvadeshik Arya Pratinidhi Sabha in India was concerned about the division in the Arya Samaj movement in Mauritius. For the purpose of restoring unity by means of persuasion, Swami Swatantranand Saraswati arrived in Mauritius in February, 1950, on the advice of the Sarvadeshik Sabha. He was the guest of Shri Dharam Yash Dev, the Commissioner for the Government of India in Mauritius. After protracted negotiations, the Arya Paropkarini Sabha and the Arya Pratinidhi Sabha agreed to merge and a new body, the Arya Sabha Mauritius, was formed and also registered. As time did not permit Swami Swatantranand was unable to bring the Arya Ravi Ved Pracharini Sabha under the flag of the Arya Sabha Mauritius.

Swamiji returned to India and his untimely death was a severe blow to the Arya Samaj. His life was dedicated to the service of the backward and downtrodden men and women of his country. He spread the message of the Vedas abroad and he was held in high esteem and treated with reverence. The Arya Sabha Mauritius worked for some time according to the plans chalked out by Swami Swatantranand, but the spirit of partisanship again reared its head and at the first election of the executive committee all the representatives of the former Arya Pratinidhi Sabha were unseated. The disillusioned group of members comprised persons such as Mr Mohunlall Mohith, Mr Gopichand Chuttur, Mr Mahesh Sardar, Pandit Gavasingh, Pt Aniroodh Sharma and Pt Dhoorundhur who reconstituted the Arya Pratinidhi Sabha which was registered in 1954.

The Sarvadeshik Arya Pratinidhi Sabha intervened once again and asked Swami Dhruvanand Saraswati to inquire into the cause of the split. Swamiji arrived in Mauritius towards the end of 1956 and, in spite of his ill-health, he proceeded to investigate the cause of the dissension. Finally an agreement was reached and

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the Arya Pratinidhi Sabha merged with the Arya Sabha Mauritius for the second time in 1958. There was a new era of co-operation and understanding when the Hon. Satcam Boolell who was a minister in the Government became the president of the Sabha.

He was at the helm of the Sabha for six consecutive years and preserved the unity of the members, which had been at stake previously. He was followed by Mr Rabindra Ghurburrun, as president, for a short while. Mr Mohunlall Mohith then took over from him. The Hon. Satcam Boolell's contribution to the progress of the Arya Sabha remains praiseworthy. The new, modern buildings which accommodate the Aryan Vedic School Vacoas, the Aryan Vedic School Laventure and the Gayasingh Orphanage were all erected during his term of office as president of the Arya Sabha Mauritius. A number of Samaj mandirs were also built throughout the country during the same period. Many of these were rebuilt in concrete and others that were damaged by the cyclone "Carol" have been repaired. Above all, the relationship between all the branches of the Arya Sabha and their head-quarters was strengthened and the Arya Samaj regained the prestige which had commanded the respect of the country in the past.

With Mr Mohunlall as the president, the Arya Sabha concentrated its effort in the educational and spiritual fields. A College for boys, the D.A.V. College, was established. The teaching of Hindi and the provision of religious instruction were extended. Secondary education in Hindi gained ground. As a result of the foresight of Mr Mohith, the Arya Samaj has been able to produce a number of students with the 'Vidya Visharda' and the "Vidya Vachaspati" certificates. Many among the younger group can perform the simple Vedic havan with perfection. Mr Mohunlall Mohith has become the symbol of the Arya Samaj in Mauritius. He has contributed generously, both in Mauritius and in India, for the purpose of creating a trust that would benefit students and writers of the Arya Samaj. He has in fact, become a rare example of dedication to the cause of the Vedic mission. Among the members of the Arya Samaj in Mauritius there are no distinctions of class and caste, and equal opportunity is available to all without discrimination.

Professor B. Bissoondoyal is a great exponent of Vedic philosophy. He was educated at the D.A.V. College and the University of Calcutta. He has rendered commendable service in the field of Hindi education. He has made a worthy contribution towards a better understanding of the Vedic religion and philosophy among the French-speaking people.

With the establishment of the Arya Samaj the recital of Vedic mantras, the performance of yajna and an emphasis on the ancient Vedic ideals of worship and prayer captivated the interest of an increasing number of Hindus. The widespread illiteracy among them had been the cause of their having become the

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adherents of a variety of cults, questionable beliefs and superstitions.

When Swami Narayananand arrived in Mauritius in 1952, he introduced the Mahayajna. He succeeded in encouraging the performance of such yajnas in the various districts of Mauritius. It was a unique achievement to see all sections of the Hindu community participating in these yajna for an hour in the morning and for another hour before sunset. In the evenings there were lectures and kirtans. Swamiji infused a new spirit of religious awakening among the Hindus.

In 1954 Mahatma Anand Bhikshu arrived in the country. He continued with the good work that had been established by Swami Narayananand. The Vedic yajna, Upanishad katha and marriage according to the SanskarVidhi of Swami Dayanand, became a way of life in the homes of many Hindus.

The Arya Samaj opposed child-marriage and encouraged the re-marriage of widows. It also tried to prevent social evils that led to moral depravity. The caste system that had imposed humiliation on a section of the Hindu society was questioned by the Samaj. According to Swami Dayanand's interpretation of the Vedas, the division of society had to be on the basis of human dignity and capability. Illiteracy that had destroyed the spirit of nationalism had to be countered by means of a campaign for educational advancement.

The Golden Jubilee of the Arya Samaj in Mauritius was celebrated in 1960 and the programme continued for a week. The Mahayajna was performed on each day and this was followed by an evening of varied activities, including speeches and kirtans. The presence of Swami Dhruvanand added to the success of the celebration. Dr J. Seegobin presided at the first day's function. Among the notable persons who participated in the celebration were Sir Sewoosagar Ramgoolam, Prof. Ramprakash, Mr Mohunlall Mohith, Mr Manan Bharath, Pt Sukdeo Rampyar, Mr Jainarayan Rai, Mr Munindranath Varma (M.A.), Mr Satcam Boolell and Vanprasthi Dhrundar. All the speakers referred to the dynamic role of Swami Dayanand Saraswati in initiating religious reforms that were based on the teachings of the Vedas.

Today there are about three hundred branches of the Arya Samaj in Mauritius with thirty-two Vedic missionaries. An example of the living force of the Arya Samaj was witnessed when, in 1970, the Arya Sabha Mauritius and the Arya Ravi Ved Pracharini Sabha jointly celebrated the Sixtieth Anniversary of the establishment of the Arya Samaj in Mauritius. Swami Vidyanand Videh, arrived as a guest on this occasion. The Hon. Satcam Boolell presided at the function. About fifty thousand members of the Samaj participated in the celebrations. The occasion also created a new hope of a merging of the two groups in the Arya Samaj movement in Mauritius.

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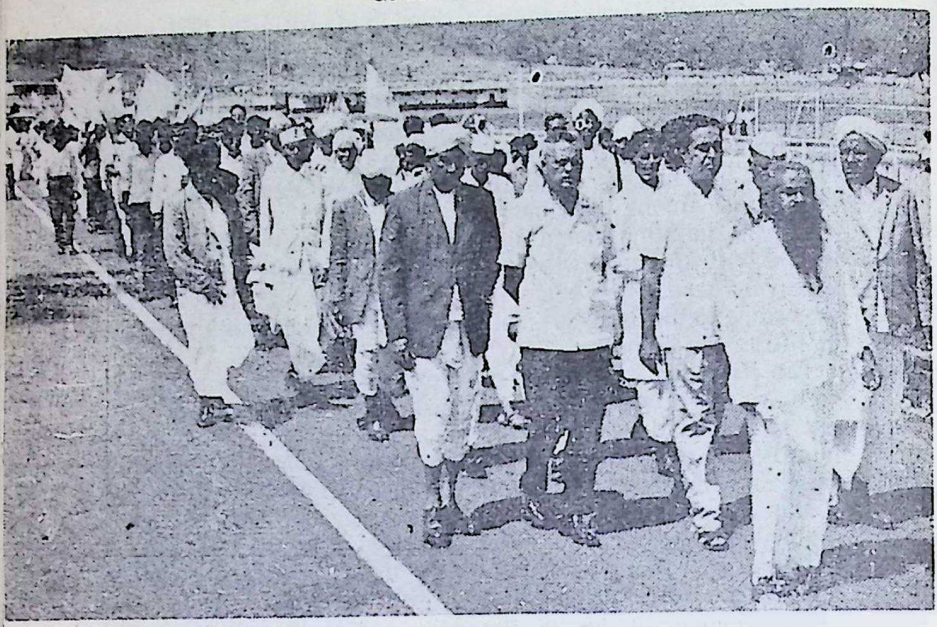
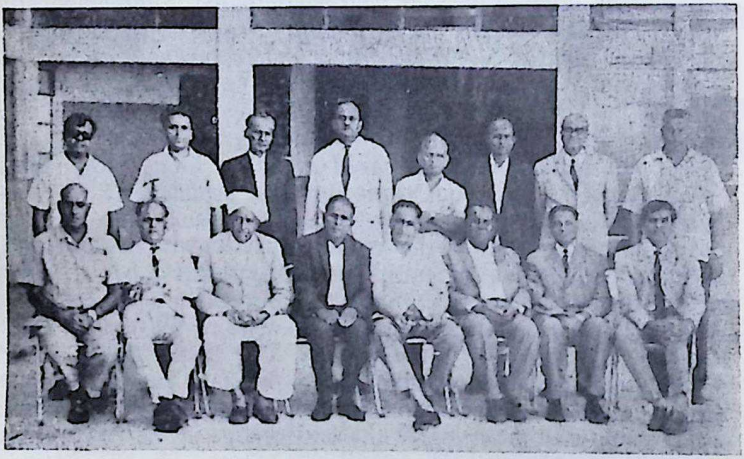
ARYA SABHA, MAURITIUS

Golden Jubilee - 1960



Procession - Port Louis

ARYA SABHA - MAURITIUS



Executive Members (1973)

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Mauritius was destined to play an important role in the Arya Samaj movement abroad. Sir Sewoosagar Ramgoolam, the Prime Minister of Mauritius, was invited to India to inaugurate the Eleventh International Aryan Conference. At the same time the International Aryan League in New Delhi decided to hold its Twelfth International Conference in Mauritius. This news created a great deal of enthusiasm among the members of the Arya Samaj in Mauritius.

The proposed Conference took place in Mauritius from the 22nd to the 26th of August, 1973. The Vedic scholar and head of the research department of the Arya Samaj, Acharya Vaidyanath Shastri, Acharya Krishnaji, (the priest designate of the Mahayajna) and Pandit Narendra (head convenor of the Arya Samaj Centenary Celebrations) who were delegated by the Sarvadeshik Sabha arrived in Mauritius three weeks before the Maha Sammelan to advise and guide the Arya Sabha. The message of the forthcoming Conference was spread by them by means of lecture-tours, radio broadcasts and television appearances.

The General Secretary of the Sarvadeshik Arya Pratinidhi Sabha (New Delhi), Shri Omprakash Tyagi, M.P., was in Mauritius a week before the Conference. He gave his wise leadership and made the Maha Sammelan an event to be recorded in letters of gold in the history of the Arya Samaj in Mauritius. Mahatma Anand Swami, Swami Satya Prakash, Swami Brahmanand Dandee, a number of Arya Vanprasthis and other learned persons comprised a delegation of over a hundred from India, under the leadership of Shri Seth Pratapsingh Shoorji Vallabhdas (President of the Maha Sammelan) and Dr D. Ram (President of the International Aryan League, New Delhi). From South Africa a delegation of a hundred Arya brothers and sisters led by Shri Sukhraj Chotai (President, Arya Pratinidhi Sabha, South Africa) and Pandit Nardev Vedalankar participated in the Conference. From East Africa Shri Achradas and Shri Rawal were among the overseas delegates.

The significance of the Conference to Mauritius was the establishment of a public library in the Arya Bhawan Port Louis, extension of the D.A.V. College buildings and the teaching of Hindi up to College level. Consideration was also to be given to the feasibility of having a permanent representative of the Sarvadeshik Arya Pratinidhi Sabha in Mauritius for the purpose of training local missionaries who could in turn spread the message of the Vedas among the people.

EDUCATION

The Arya Samaj urged the absolute necessity of a sound education for both boys and girls. This contributed in a positive manner to the building up of the present level of the educated class in the Indo-Mauritian community. Illiteracy has been almost

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eliminated. The greatest success of the Arya Samaj has been in the field of Hindi education.

While placing an emphasis on literacy, the Arya Samaj became particularly interested in providing adequate facilities for the teaching of Hindi. A school for instruction in Hindi was built on a property already available to the Samaj, and it opened on 18th July, 1918. Only twelve pupils enrolled when the school commenced. As the general body of the members of the Samaj did not consist of personal of adequate financial resources, the sacrifice that was made by the members to support the teaching of Hindi could be regarded as very praiseworthy.

Later it was decided to introduce other subjects of the primary school curriculum in order to change the school into a government-aided institution. Finally this aim was achieved. As a teacher in charge of the school, Pt Kashinath contributed greatly to the progress of this institution. Another person to whom the school owes much is Mr Dhunputh Lallah who was the manager of the school for five years. Mr N. Saddul was the head teacher of the school from 1924 to 1952. One of its ex-pupils, Miss Mokshada Kistoe, M. A., is now the head mistress of Queen Elizabeth College. The school has also been the headquarters of the Vacoas Arya Samaj.

In 1920 although there were about seventy-five Hindi schools, the Government had not decided to introduce Hindi as a part of the school curriculum. When Maharaj Kunwarsingh arrived in Mauritius in 1924 he pointed out that it was necessary for Indian languages to be taught in the primary schools. Some time thereafter the oriental languages were included in the school curriculum, but the time and money provided for this purpose was very inadequate. When Prof. Ramprakash was appointed to the staff of the Teacher Training College at Beau Bassin, he organized the teaching of the oriental languages on a more acceptable basis.

The teaching of Hindi was carried a stage further when another Aryan Vedic School was opened at Laventure in 1938, mainly through the efforts of Mr Ramsaroop Ramgutty. Chutter Master also rendered a lifetime of service to the Saraswatee School in Egroignard. Pt Kashinath and Pt Jugdutt trained Hindi teachers when a teacher-training school was established at Mesnil. The great philanthropist of New Grove, Mr Dookhee Gungaran, organized and financed a number of girls' schools. Pt Sookdeo Rampiar was sincerely interested in the advancement of Hindi. In 1954 Mr Sookhoo Ramprasad arranged for Hindi examinations conducted by religious bodies in India to be written in Mauritius. The persons who were engaged in the writing and publishing of Hindi school books were Pt Ramavadh, Pt Kashinath, Pt Atmaram, Mr D. Bonamally, Pt B. Bissoondoyal and Prof. Ramprakash.

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About three hundred evening Hindi schools, both primary and secondary, are being conducted by the various Arya Samajes. Recently a committee was formed comprising the Aryans, Sanatanists and other Indo-Mauritians to promote the study of the oriental languages and to make representations for the inclusion of these languages in the Government secondary schools.

THE D.A.V. COLLEGE

The Arya Samaj took the earliest opportunity of establishing Hindi schools. This also made it possible for religious instruction to be imparted. As from 1947, Vedic religious examinations, comprising four categories, were introduced. Gradually these examinations received more encouraging support. The pupils of the Aryan Vedic schools in Mauritius are able to say the Sandhya and perform the Havan. But, as Hindi education did not go beyond the primary school level, there was a definite limit to the progress that could be attained.

The D.A.V. College of Mauritius opened on 11th January, 1965 at the seat of the Arya Sabha Mauritius, and it was the fulfilment of a long-felt need in the existing system of education. The pupils of the Aryan Vedic schools were thus ensured a continuity of education in Hindi and advanced religious instruction. The opening of such a high school was delayed owing to the lack of financial resources. But it was Swami Akilanand who encouraged its establishment. A section of the Arya Bhawan was converted into classrooms and the College commenced with seventy students who were in the charge of three teachers. The management of this College was entrusted to Dr J. Seegobin, a man who was devoted to the cause of education. Within four years the D.A.V. College was moved to a modern building in the city of Port Louis. The College is now recognized and approved by the Ministry of Education for the teaching of both the Arts and Science.

The Arya Sabha Mauritius wanted the D.A.V. College to be a centre for the teaching of Sanskrit as a compulsory subject, but sufficient interest was not shown by the parents and students to make this possible. Hindi has been retained as a compulsory subject. The management is hoping that Sanskrit will find a place in the curriculum in the near future. The other subjects taught are English, French, History, Geography, Art, Music, Commerce, Economics, Accountancy, Chemistry, Physics, Biology and Mathematics. Attempts are being made to include technical subjects in the teaching programme so that the students could be given the necessary background for Engineering which is essential for the industrial development of the country. Students who cannot go abroad are being encouraged to adopt a curriculum which could be completed at the University of Mauritius.

The cost of maintaining the D.A.V. College is fairly high. The school fees are very much below those charged by other secondary schools. The reason for this is that the Arya Sabha Mauritius

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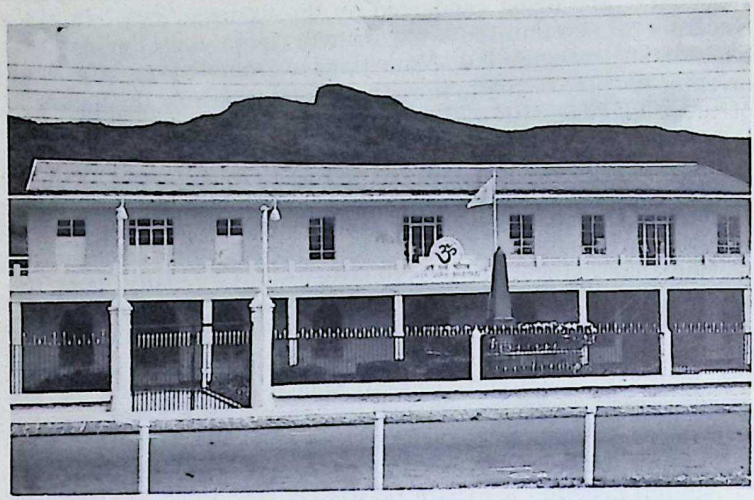
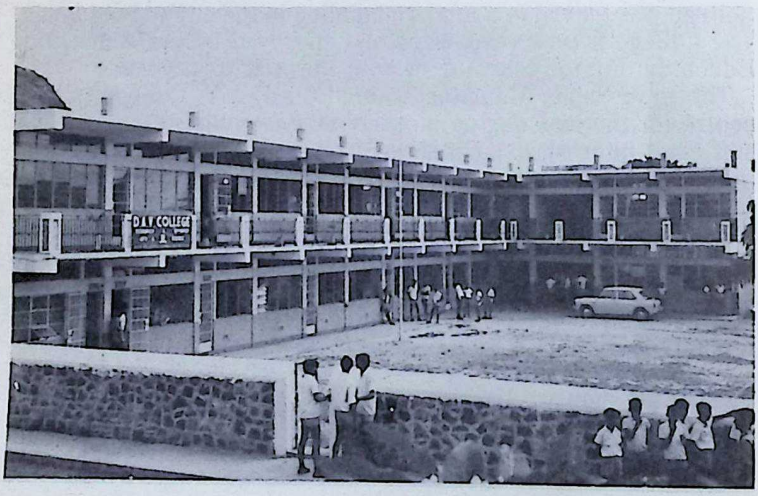
HEADQUARTERS OF ARYA SABHA, MAURITIUS



Arya Bhawan - Port Louis



D.A.V. College, Port Louis, Mauritius

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is keen to spread education based on Vedic principles. The teaching staff and other people serving the D.A.V. College are paid salaries and wages as laid down by the Government. An insurance scheme is under consideration to ensure retirement benefits to the staff of the College.

The subsidy to the D.A.V. College from the Arya Sabha Mauritius is a substantial amount. The Sabha is proceeding with its plans to extend the College buildings, particularly with a view to improving the laboratory facilities.

With the generous help of the parent D.A.V. College in India, two students of the D.A.V. College of Mauritius are studying at the D.A.V. College of Chandigarh. They are being trained to join the teaching staff of the D.A.V. College of Mauritius. Negotiations are being made to arrange for a teacher-exchange system between the D.A.V. institutions in India and the one in Mauritius. If this succeeds it would be a priceless contribution towards a sound Vedic education at this outpost where the traditions and culture of India are being kept alive among the Indian settlers.

VEDIC NEWSPAPERS IN MAURITIUS

The Arya Patrika, a weekly publication of the Arya Samaj, first appeared in 1912. The Samaj did not own a printing press, but fortunately Mr Manilall M. Doctor placed the Hindustan Press, which belonged to him, at the disposal of the Arya Samaj. The publication was discontinued after a short period of existence. However, the Arya Patrika reappeared in 1924 as a weekly newspaper of the Arya Paropkarini Sabha.

The Arya Pratinidhi Sabha established the Shradhanand Press and commenced with the publication of the weekly newspaper, the Arya Vir. These two publications continued till 1950 when the merging of the Sabhas took place and a new weekly newspaper, the Aryodya replaced them. The first issue of a quarterly, the Vedic Journal was published on 20th November, 1971.

WOMEN IN HINDU SOCIETY

The Arya Samaj worked vigorously to irradicate illiteracy among the women of Hindu society in Mauritius despite the objections raised by the orthodox Hindus. The Samaj realised that the success of the Hindu society depended very much on the educational advancement of its women. The initial step in this direction was taken by the wife of Dr C. Bhardwaj, Mrs Sumangli Devi Bhardwaj, in 1912. Her inspiring speeches aroused a new awareness among the Hindu women of Mauritius. She emphasized the importance of affording equal opportunities to boys and girls in the field of education. She founded a women's association in Vacoas and became its president. Mrs Pattaroo was the secretary. Today, after attending the intermediary schools, girls have become teachers in the primary schools.

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Educated women, who are members of the Arya Samaj, wear the sacred thread and participate fully in the Vedic yajna.

The pioneering work in the advancement of women was done by Mrs Kamalaban (wife of Dr Rama), Mrs Bhagwathi Devi (wife of Pt Gayasingh), Mrs Parvathi Devi and Mrs Sita Devi. In 1931 a Mahila Mandal was formed in Port Louis as a result of the initiative taken by the Arya Pratinidhi Sabha. The officials were Mrs Bhagwathi Devi (Chairlady), Mrs Bakhorilall (Secretary) and Mrs Vedwathi Ramdin (Treasurer). On 19th January, 1933, a conference of women was held and it was attended by about five hundred women from all parts of Mauritius. This conference had a tremendous impact on the Hindu women and they were encouraged to participate more fully in all the organizations and activities that were intended for their benefit.

The Mahila Mandal held a national women's conference in the Arya Bhawan in Port Louis on 8th August, 1965. The president of the Conference was Mrs Soodevi Bhima and Mrs Dropathy Matabadal was the secretary. This Conference was attended by about eight hundred women from all parts of Mauritius. Mr Mohunlall Mohith, the president of the Arya Sabha, delivered the main address. For the past thirty years the Arya Samaj had carried out a vigorous campaign for social reform and the education of women was always emphasized.

On 12th April, 1970, another women's conference was held in Port Louis as a part of the Golden Jubilee celebration of the Arya Samaj movement in Mauritius. Eloquent speeches were delivered on this occasion by Mrs Lakhavani Hargovind and Mrs Sarla Devi, M.A. (Sanskrit). The Arya Mahila Mandal organized a Mahayajna in Port Louis on 30th July, 1970.

There are about fifty Mahila Sabhas in Mauritius. These Sabhas have been engaged in encouraging the performance of the Vedic yajna. They have established schools and regular conferences are held to create an awareness of the Vedic religion among the women of Mauritius. The influence of the Arya Samaj has produced women writers as well as religious reformers.

ARYA YUVAK SANGH

In 1967 the Arya Sabha of Mauritius established the Arya Yuvak Sangh. This was done in order to curb the indifference to Indian culture among the new generation of the educated Hindus. The Sangh has twenty branches. Youth conferences are held at regular intervals to provide the youth of the country with the opportunity of becoming aware of the Vedic religion and the ancient culture of India.

Pandit Usharbudh, who arrived in Mauritius from America, delivered an inspiring address at the conference of the Sangh on 12th April, 1969. In 1970 a similar conference was held in Port Louis and Dr H. Ghoora presided. The conference was opened by

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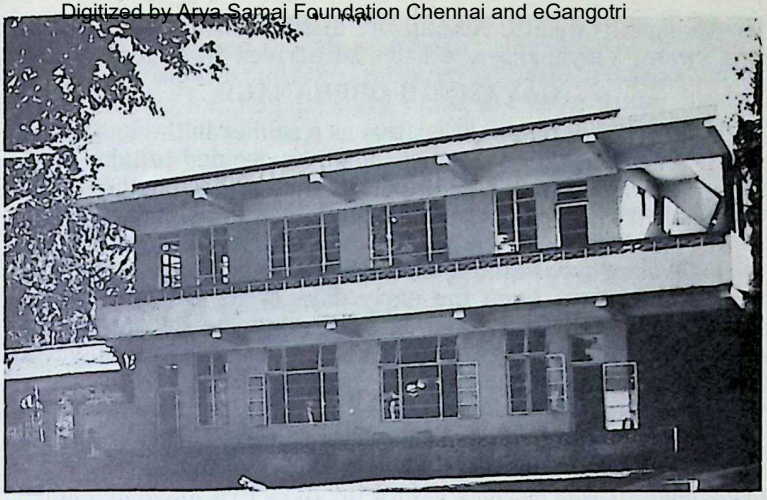

Gayasingh Orphanage
Port Louis - Mauritius

NEERGHEEN BHAWAN - Curepipe Road
Stands exactly on the site where the first Arya Samaj was established in Mauritius

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Mr Mohunlall Mohith. Among the distinguished guests present was Swami Vidyanand who had just arrived from India.

GAYASINGH ORPHANAGE

Pt Gayasingh came to Mauritius as a soldier in the Indian regiment. When the regiment disbanded, he decided to take advantage of the option which the Imperial Army offered to the soldiers who wished to stay in Mauritius. He joined the police force. His loyalty and devotion to duty was exemplary.

Pt Gayasingh was among those who were attracted to the Arya Samaj movement from the early days of its establishment in Mauritius. When he retired from service, he became a missionary of the Arya Pratinidhi Sabha. He married Bhagyawati Boolell. Both husband and wife devoted themselves to the work of the Arya Samaj. They donated to the Arya Pratinidhi Sabha the land on which the Gayasingh Orphanage stands. Pandit and Mrs Gayasingh were encouraged by the Dr J. Seegobin to start an orphanage. It was not long before the Arya Pratinidhi Sabha took charge of the Gayasingh Orphanage. In 1940 it became a recognized Government institution. Pandit Gayasingh took charge of the fund-raising for the purpose of carrying out the urgent extension of the Orphanage. When Pt Gayasingh died Mrs Gayasingh continued to serve the orphanage till the time of her death in 1959. The old orphanage building which was of wood and iron could not withstand the dangers of the cyclones. Under the leadership of Dr J. Seegobin the managing committee of the Orphanage resolved to provide the inmates with a cyclone-proof accommodation. The Government promised a substantial amount towards the proposed new building. Messrs R. G. Desai & Co., Rampul Brothers and Dr. B. Jhowry were very magnanimous in the financial support they offered.

The result was that a concrete building was erected to accommodate one hundred and fifty inmates. Further extensions have been made since then. The head matron, the physician friends and the nursing officers have contributed to the efficiency of the Orphanage and the comfort of the inmates. The institution created by the Gayasinghs stands as a shining example of their dedicated service to the community.

CONTRIBUTION TO PROGRESS BY THE ARYA SAMAJ

Indians abroad mainly comprised those who had left the shores of India to seek employment under a system of indentured labour. The impact of the new environment among these new settlers abroad, lead to social disintegration. Whatever religious order they established tended to be ill-founded as the links with the sources of learning and culture of their country of origin, India, had not only weakened but were almost non-existent.

The Arya Samaj launched forward a vigorous religious campaign among Indians who had settled in foreign lands. These

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settlers became more conscious of their cultural heritage and many of them joined the Arya Samaj movement which made it possible for them to follow a more enlightened religious path.

In Mauritius for the past sixty years, the Arya Samaj concentrated on the advancement of education. The new religious order as preached by the Arya Samaj is based on the ancient Vedas. Those who came under the influence of the Samaj abandoned many of the questionable religious and social practices. In fact, the religious awakening brought about by the Arya Samaj enhanced the prestige of the Hindu society abroad.

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CHAPTER X

ARYA PRATINIDHI SABHA — FIJI

FIJI ISLANDS

This group of islands in the central Pacific, five hundred miles south-west of Samoa, which was annexed by the British in 1874 became a British Crown Colony. Suva on Viti Levu is the capital. Viti Levu (4010 sq. miles) and Vanua Levu (2137 sq. miles) are the largest of more than three hundred islands of which about one hundred are inhabited. The main islands are of volcanic origin.

Approximately forty percent of the population are Fijians. The majority of the inhabitants are descended from the labourers imported from India to work on the sugar cane plantations. The chief exports are sugar, coconut products, manganese and gold.

ARYA SAMAJ IN FIJI

Under the system of indenture Indians were recruited and sent to Fiji. The first batch of four hundred and sixty-eight Indians arrived from India on 14th May, 1879, in the ship, Leonidas. They continued to come to Fiji until the system of indenture ended in 1920 as a result of the strenuous efforts of Mahatma Gandhi, Rev. C. F. Andrews, Rev. W. W. Pearson, Mrs Sarojini Naidu, Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya, Pandit Benasri Dass Chatturvedi, Hon. G. K. Gokhale and many other persons.

The early Indian settlers were uneducated and they had to cope with many problems and difficulties. Shri Badridutt Maharaj opened the first school for Indian children at his own expense at Wairuku in 1898. By the end of the century, Christian missionaries began to take an active interest in the education of Indians. While the influence of Christianity was growing Indians formed their own religious groups as Kabir Panthis and Ramanandis to ensure the continuation of their religious beliefs.

The Hindus were in a state of disarray and could not provide adequate inspiration for the social and religious progress of the Hindu community. The Arya Samaj as an organized religious movement, had a more dynamic role to play. The teachings of Swami Dayanand had already gained adherents in the localities of Drasa, Navua, Raki Raki, Rewa, Suva and Labasa. It was no coincidence that a group of people, namely, Shri Biharilal, Shri Gaji Pratap Singh, Shri George Nanku, Shri Mangal Singh, Pandit Shiu Dutt, Pandit Dwarka Dutt and others met at the home of Shri Mangal Singh on 25th December, 1904, to form the first properly constituted Arya Samaj. Soon the smoke of the Vedic havan in the name of the Arya Samaj was to cover the entire Fiji sky.

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The early years of the Arya Samaj movement were difficult. Shri Indra Narayan together with a group of supporters made a concerted effort to realise two important aims of the Arya Samaj in Fiji, namely, to spread the message of the Vedas and to establish a system of formal education.

As early as 1908 a piece of land was purchased in Samabula for a temple and a school. But when Swami Manoharanand Saraswati arrived in Fiji on 6th January, 1913, at the invitation of Pandit Ram Awadh, the plans for building a school began in earnest. After a great deal of hard work and with the generosity of Aryans throughout Fiji, enough money was collected to build a school. The dreams of the Samaj were finally realised with the construction and registration of a Gurukul in 1918 on the western side of Viti Levu.

The Arya Pratinidhi Sabha of Fiji was registered as a religious body through the efforts of Dr Manilal who came to Fiji in 1912 at the request of Mahatma Gandhi to help the Indians of Fiji. Swami Manoharanand became the first president of the Sabha. The Sabha is affiliated to Sarvadeshik A. P. Sabha of New Delhi.

As religious reform is one of the aims of the Arya Samaj, it is bound to encounter opposition. Vashishta Muni gave rise to a system of religious debate as a challenge to the Arya Samaj movement in Fiji. Pandit Shiu Dutt and Shri Indra Narayan defended the teachings of the Arya Samaj against the attacks of nearly all the religious organizations in Fiji. During the later period, the cause of the Arya Samaj was championed by Pandit Vishnu Deo (O.B.E.), Pt J. P. Maharaj, Pt Amichandra, Pt Gopendra Narayan Pathik, Thakur Kundun Singh Kush, Shri R. Parmeshwar (M.B.E.), Pt Raghavanand (M.B.E.), Babu Ram Singh and others. But the antagonism that characterized the early years of the Samaj, gradually disappeared. Religious preachers from India, namely Mehta Jaimini, Pt Shri Krishna Sharma and others helped to restore Arya Samaj to its rightful place in the religious life of the Hindu community of Fiji.

Pt Gopendra Narayan Pathik a teacher from the Gurukul of Brindaben in India, came to Fiji in 1925 as a preacher. He initiated the system of sending young children to India for further education. This system which lasted until 1934, served a useful purpose as those who returned to Fiji after being educated in India, contributed to the work of the Arya Samaj. They also obtained high and responsible posts in the Government service and other spheres.

Pandit Shri Krishna Sharma arrived from Rajkot in 1926 and gave a new direction to the Arya Samaj and increased its influence and popularity. He was young, energetic and full of life. He endeared himself both to the young and old alike . He was a fluent speaker with a charming personality. The listeners were fascinated by his selection of inspiring songs. He improved the organization of the Arya Samaj. He encouraged the practice of

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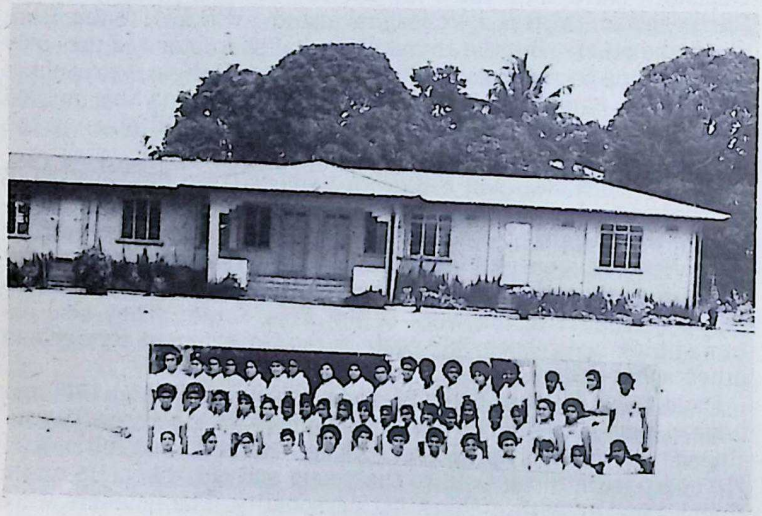
Gurukul - Established, 1918 - Saweni, Lautoka



D.A.V. Girls' College - Samabula (Suva)

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converting persons of other faiths to the Vedic religion by means of the shuddhi sanskar.He left Fiji in 1929, but in 1956 he returned to participate in the Golden Jubilee of the Arya Samaj movement in Fiji. He founded the D.A.V. College at Samabula in Suva and an Arya mandir in Nadi.

Pandit Amichandra, M.A., a graduate of the Gurukul Kangri arrived in 1927. He worked unremittingly for the Arya Samaj until his death in 1954. He encouraged the education of girls and emphasized the importance of secondary education. He was the first principal of the D.A.V. College in Fiji. He laid a sound tradition for the College which has functioned very successfully since its inception. His name will remain enshrined in the annals of Fiji particularly in the field of female education.

Thakur Kundun Kush who came to Fiji in 1928 as a teacher, served the Arya Samaj with distinction. He conducted debates and lectured very ably. His logic and method of presentation of the arguments were really very marvellous and worthy of remark. Thakur Sardar Singh came as a teacher and did his work very energetically. He established the Aryan Scouts for the welfare of youth. Mehta Jaimini came to Fiji in 1928 as a preacher. He spoke in a very interesting manner and in fluent English about Aryan thought, belief and literature. Mahatma Anand Swami visited Fiji in 1966 and he impressed the people with his oratory and his message of the Vedic teachings as enunciated by Swami Dayanand. Professor Ushar Budh Arya was in Fiji from February to April in 1972. His knowledge of the Vedas and Vedic literature was profound in every detail. The audiences were spellbound when he recited the Sanskrit mantras in a melodious voice. He spoke fluently in English and Hindi. He impressed the people of Fiji and was granted an audience by the Prime Minister.

The most outstanding achievement of the Arya Samaj in Fiji is the establishment and maintenance of a number of primary and secondary schools. All the schools are multi-racial in character and they serve the needs of all the people of Fiji. The contribution in the field of education made by the Arya Samaj could not have been possible without the loyalty and dedication of the pioneering settlers who worked under serious handicaps. In the recent years various improvements have been made to the buildings. The success of the schools is the result of the co-operative effort of the Arya Pratinidhi Sabha of Fiji, the affiliated Samajes, parents, teachers and students. The standard of work in these schools has been equal to the work being done in other similar institutions.

The primary schools of the Arya Samaj are Gurukul Saweni, Lautoka (1918); Vunimono Arya School (1930); Arya Samaj Girls' School, Samabula (1930); Arya Kanya Patshala, Ba (1938); Bhawani Dayal Memorial, Wainibuku (1942); Naduna Arya Patshala, Labasa (1943); Swami Shradhanand Memorial School,

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Samabula (1952); Vunikavikaloa Arya School, Ra (1952); D.A.V. Primary, Ba (1956); Korotari Arya Patshala, Labasa (1961); Wainikoro Arya Pathshala, Labasa (1963); and Pandit Vishnu Deo Memo, Suva (1970). The accommodation in these schools range from eighty to over eight hundred pupils. The secondary schools that could accommodate from two hundred to six hundred pupils are D.A.V. Boys' College, Samabula (1952); D.A.V. Girls' College, Samabula (1952); D.A.V. High School, Ba (1953); Pt Vishnu Deo Memo, Lautoka (1972); Bhawani Dayal Memorial — Nausori, Wainibuku (1973); and Arya High School — Naduna Labasa (1973).

The Arya Samaj grew into a body of considerable influence in Fiji. Many individuals have given to the Samaj their unstinted service over the years. The property of the Samaj at present has a value of more than two million Fijian Dollars, without any encumbrance. The Arya Pratinidhi Sabha of Fiji has eleven affiliated Arya Samajes at different centres throughout Fiji. These Samajes have Mahila Mandals (women's groups) and Yuvak Sabhas (youth organizations) as auxiliary units. There are four Vedic mandirs (temples) in Samabula and two in Vanua Levu. A piece of land has been reserved in Toorak, a suburb of Suva for a temple and offices. Two leases have been procured from the Housing Authority for schools in Nadera Suva and Drasa in Lautoka.

The religious aspect of the work of the Arya Samaj has not progressed at the same rate as that in the educational sphere. There are twelve registered marriage officers and they try to impart the teachings of the Vedas as the occasions arise. Negotiations are in progress with the Sarvadeshik Arya Pratinidhi Sabha of New Delhi to obtain the services of Vedic missionaries in the near future.

The officials of the Arya Pratinidhi Sabha at present are Pandit B. Raghavanand, M.B.E., J. P., (Arya Ratna) president; Shri R. Parmeshwar, M.B.E. (Arya Ratna), Pt G. N. Pathik (Arya Ratna), Shri Jaswant Singh — vice-presidents; Dr Ram Lakhan, D.D.S., M.B.E. (Arya Ratna) — Secretary General; Shri Devendra Pathik, B.A., LL.B., Shri Shardanand, J. P., Shri Surendra Prasad, LL.B. — assistant secretaries; Shri Jai Narayan Jokhan — treasurer; Shri Ravindra Singh — assistant treasurer; Shri Prahalad and Pt.Bhagauti Prasad — librarians. There are forty members on the central Executive Committee.

GURUKUL ARYA SAMAJ — SAWENI, LAUTOKA — FIJI

Lautoka is the second largest urban centre in Fiji, the first being the capital city, Suva. Six miles from the town of Lautoka is situated the settlement of Saweni, the seat of Gurukul Arya Samaj. The Arya Samaj in Fiji was already formed at Suva in 1904 and its influence was gradually spreading to all parts of the

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country. A group of influential members of the Arya Samaj met frequently to discuss the social and educational problems of the Indians of Fiji.

In 1916 the Arya Samaj held its first convention at Suva and it was decided to establish an Arya Samaj school either at Suva or Lautoka. At a subsequent convention the same year at Drasa it was resolved that the proposed institution should be established at Lautoka as the members of the Samaj at this place had shown a greater enthusiasm and had collected more funds. A steering committee was formed under the chairmanship of Swami Ram Manoharanand. Babu Randhir Singh, Shri B. L. Hiralal Seth and Pandit Hardayal Sharma were active members. The Gurukul Indian School was completed in 1918. The institution was officially opened on 7th November, 1919, by the District Commissioner.

The Gurukul Arya Samaj remains the leading Samaj in the whole of Fiji Islands. A number of distinguished people participated in the activities of the Samaj since its inception. It has played an important role in the preservation of the Hindi language, Indian culture and religion in Fiji.

Shri Parmanand Singh, an Indian member of the Fiji Legislative Council, stated that he was "extremely impressed by the perfect discipline of the pupils and the exemplary morals of the staff as a whole. It is no exaggeration to say that this institution (Gurukul Indian School) is the best of its kind in the Colony." The prominent religious teachers who came from India and taught at the Gurukul Indian School in its early days, were Swami Ram Manoharanand, Thakur Sardar Singh, Pandit Shiudutt Sharma, Pandit Gopendra Narain Pathik, Pandit Hardayal Sharma and Thakur Kundun Singh Kush. Others who taught at the Gurukul Indian School during the 1930's included former members of the Fiji Legislative Council, namely, Pandit Amichandra, M. A., Pandit Ayodhya Prasad, J. P., and Shri B. D. Lakshman, B. A., B.T.

Among the prominent members of the Fiji Indian community, who held the position of manager of the Gurukul School in its early days were Shri S. B. Patel, a prominent Barrister from Lautoka; Mr B. L. Hiralal Seth, a prominent Saweni businessman; Shri Sarju Prasad, a prominent businessman and a leading figure in the Arya Samaj from Saru, Lautoka; and Pandit Hardayal Sharma from Nadi.

The leading citizens of Fiji who were responsible for the establishment of Gurukul Arya Samaj were Babu Randhir Singh of Ba, Pandit Ramnarayan Mishra of Viseisei (Lautoka), Shri Mamraj of Sabeto, Shri Ram Singh Maharaj of Saweni, Shri Balessar Pande of Viseisei, Shri Shiunandan Tiwari and Shri Ramnath Chaudhari of Ba.

The present office bearers of the Gurukul Arya Samaj which is affiliated to the Arya Pratinidhi Sabha of Fiji, and which has about five hundred members, are Shri Arjun Sardar (president),

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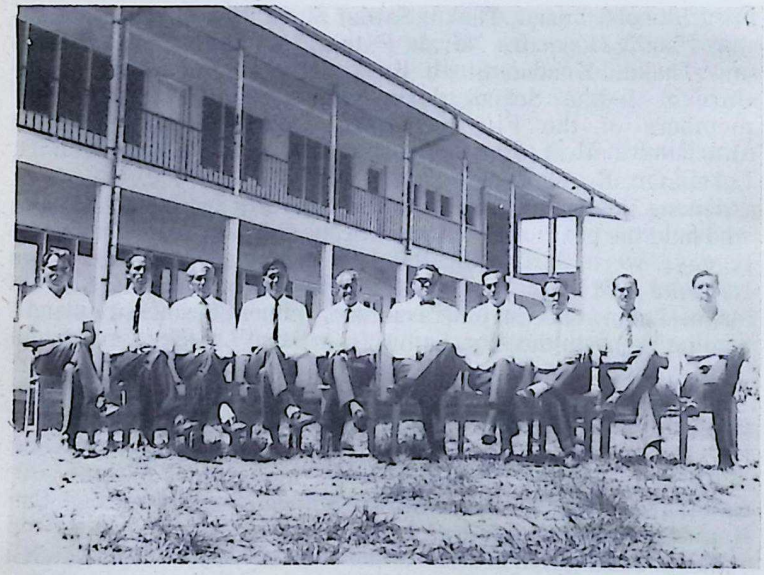
Mr R. K. CHETA
President - Suva Arya Samaj

Mr ARJUN SARDAR
President - Gurukul Arya Samaj, Lautoka

VISHNU DEO MEMORIAL SECONDARY SCHOOL - Saweni, Lautoka



Members of the Board of Governors (1974)

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Pandit Ram Nand and Shri Bansraj Sardar (vice-presidents), Pandit Bhagauti Prasad (secretary) and Shri Ram Pher (treasurer). The members of the working committee are Shanti Saroj, Bansraj Sardar, Pandit Ram Baran, Hira Prasad, Ram Pher, Jagdeo, Raghunandan, Shiu Prasad Rai, Sukhdeo, Karan Deo Sharma and Nishtadeo Sharma.

VISHNU DEO MEMORIAL SECONDARY SCHOOL

In 1972 a secondary section of the Gurukul Indian School was established and within two years it had about five hundred students of both sexes. Apart from Indians, it also admitted Fijian students. The secondary section of the Gurukul Indian school is named the "Vishnu Deo Memorial Secondary School" in memory of the greatest Indian born in Fiji — Pandit Vishnu Deo, "Jan Ratna," O.B.E., M.L.C. He served the Indian community of Fiji as a member of the Fiji Legislative Council for thirty years. He was the doyen of the Arya Samaj movement in Fiji.

There was close co-operation between the Arya Pratinidhi Sabha of Fiji and the Gurukul Arya Samaj in the establishment of the Vishnu Deo Memorial Secondary school. The controlling authority of this school is vested in the Arya Pratinidhi Sabha of Fiji. The Sabha has delegated the management of the school of the Gurukul Arya Samaj which is under the leadership of Shri Surendra Prasad, LL. B., of Lautoka, who is the manager and chairman of the Board of Governors.

The Vishnu Deo Memorial School has been built at a cost of a hundred thousand dollars. Apart from academic education, stress is also being placed on technical, religious and cultural education. At present it has a staff of fifteen members under the leadership of Shri R. S. Dube who is a dedicated teacher.

From its inception in 1916 to the present day, the Gurukul Arya Samaj has made tremendous progress and has contributed greatly to the religious, social, cultural and educational advancement of Indians in Fiji. With the industry and enthusiasm of its young members, under the guidance of its old members, the Samaj could continue to serve with greater vigour and zeal and to become a model of progress.

ARYA SAMAJ — SUVA

It is believed that one Behari Lal, a Punjabi young man, aged about twenty-two years, who was on his way to the Argentine (South America) from India, happened to pass through Australia and thence to Fiji where he broke his journey and took a clerical employment with the Vancouver Sugar Refining Company at Nuvua, about thirty miles from Suva. He frequented Suva from Navua. Babu Mangal Singh had a property in Samabula, about two miles from Suva City, which included a small building where people from all parts of Fiji gathered quite often. This place became a social centre for Indians mainly from the Suva area. It

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was at this rendezvous that Behari was a regular visitor. He possessed a copy of the Satyarth Prakash written in the Urdu language. He read and explained portions from this book to the congregation each Sunday. The regular listeners were so impressed that they eventually formed the first Arya Samaj at this centre in Fiji on 25th December, 1904.

For many years the main activities of the Samaj had been to establish and run primary schools and D.A.V. Colleges for boys and girls. The Suva Arya Samaj also took an active interest in establishing schools at Wainibuku and Nausori, which are more than ten miles away. Weekly satsangs have been held since the founding of the Suva Samaj in 1904. In addition, for some years the members of the Samaj have been conducting meetings once a week at the homes of members, where the Satyarth Prakash, Rigvedadi Bhashya Bhumika and other religious books are read and discussed.

The properties of Suva Arya Samaj were transferred to the Arya Pratinidhi Sabha of Fiji, when the Samaj affiliated to the Sabha in 1936. The persons who contributed to the progress of the Arya Samaj in the early days were Pandit Shiu Dutt Sharma, Gaji Pratap Singh, Basdeo Rai, Indra Narayan, Pt. Dwaraka Prasad Maharaj, Chaudary Kanhai Singh, Jagarnath Sudhakar Gaji, Tikaram Verma, Kanhaiya Lal Verma and others as well. The following is a list of the presidents and secretaries of the Samaj: Babu Manjal Singh and Shri Bihari Lal (1904); no records available (1905 — 1926); Pt. Jagarnath Prasad Maharaj and Shri R. Parmeshwar (1927); Pt Jagarnath P. Maharaj and Shri Narendra Gaji (1954); Shri Shankar Pratap and Shri Narendra Gaji (1964); Dr Ram Lakhan and Shri Narendra Gaji (1965); Shri Kumari Saraswati Devi and Shri R. Parmeshwar (1966); Shri Harish Chandra Gaji and Shri Ram Karen Cheta (1967); Shri Ram Karen Cheta and Shri Ravindra Pratap Singh (1970).

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CHAPTER XIA

ARYA PRATINIDHI SABHA BURMA (RANGOON)

FOUNDING OF THE ARYA SAMAJ MOVEMENT

Some years after the founding of the Arya Samaj by Swami Dayanand, the message of this religious movement reached Burma as well. The Arya Samaj was first established in Mandalay and then in Rangoon in 1898. Twenty-two Arya Samajes were organized in the various districts of Burma before the Arya Pratinidhi Sabha of Rangoon was established in 1930. The main function of the Arya Pratinidhi Sabha, in the early days of its existence, was to make the necessary arrangements for Vedic preachers and philosophers to visit the districts of Burma where Arya Samajes were formed.

In 1937 the constitutional separation of India and Burma became apparent and some problems were encountered by the Arya Samajes. Further, for about sixteen years, as a result of the Second World War, the Arya Samaj movement in Burma was completely disrupted.

In 1952 Pandit Ganga Prasad Upadhyaya visited Burma. His exhortations led to the holding of a Vedic conference in Mandalay on 14th April, 1952. Of the twenty-four Arya Samajes in Burma at the time, the ones represented at the conference were Myitkina, Mogok, Mandalay, Taunggyi, Lashio, Maymyo, Monywa, Shwebo, Kalaw, Zeyawadi and Rangoon. At this conference the Arya Pratinidhi Sabha of Rangoon was revived and the officials elected were Ramsarandas Joshi (president), Dr Omprakash (secretary) and Ramdas Chetrapal (treasurer). The rejuvenation of the Sabha gave rise to renewed interest in the propagation of the Vedic religion. In 1959 Sri Chandradutt (Sahitya Ratna) who was invited by the Sabha, undertook a tour of all the districts where the Samajes existed and also some other places, to spread the message of the Vedas.

In 1960 Swami Anand Saraswati arrived in Burma. His lecture-tours of the various districts gave an added impetus to the Arya Samaj movement. As the volume of work of the Pratinidhi Sabha increased, the services of another preacher, Kedarnath Visharada, were obtained. The work of the Sabha gained strength from the presence in Burma of two very able preachers of the Vedic religion. The Pratinidhi Sabha influenced and in some measure controlled the activities of the affiliated Arya Samajes. Efforts were made to carry the message of the Vedas even to the districts where the Arya Samaj did not exist. Tracts were also published and distributed to inform the people about the significance of the festivals that were celebrated.

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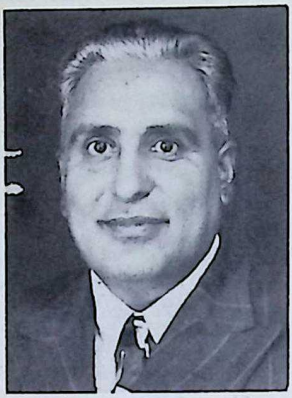
ARYA PRATINIDHI SABHA - BURMA
Officials



Mr HARBANSLAL GANDHI
President

DR OM PRAKASH
Secretary

Preachers

Pt. CHANDERDUTT VARMA
(Sahitya Ratna)

Pt. KEDARNATH
(Vidya Visharda)

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In October, 1967, the new premises of the Arya Samaj of Mogok was opened by Dr Omprakash. Several delegates from the various Arya Samajes of Burma were present on this occasion. The Pratinidhi Sabha took advantage of the opportunity to focus attention on the need for formulating a programme of activities to secure a more effective means of propagating the teachings of Rishi Dayanand. The result was that a very successful conference took place in Rangoon on the 27th and 28th January, 1968. A resident of Lashio, Sri Ramdev Chetrapal, presided at the conference. A new feature on this occasion was the introduction of a youth conference under the chairmanship of Sri Dayaram, M.A. The organizing secretary was Sri Dharmapal. A large number of the young people, mainly the college and high school students, participated. Appropriate bodies to serve the religious and social needs of the younger generation were organized. While their attention was drawn to the teachings of the Vedas, they were encouraged to take an active part in the work of the Arya Samaj.

The officials of the Arya Pratinidhi Sabha elected at the Rangoon conference were Sri Harvanslal Gandhi (President), Dr Omprakash (Secretary) and Sri Ramlal Mendi (Treasurer). There were also other officials and members. In order to arouse more interest in Burma in the teachings of the Vedas, it became necessary to make suitable literature available in the Burmese language. In this matter, co-operation was obtained from Pandit Ganga Prasad Upadhyaya of India; Sarvadeshik Arya Pratinidhi Sabha, New Delhi; Sri Govindram Hasanand, New Delhi; the Arya Samajes of Rangoon, Mandalay and Myitkyina; All Burma Hindu Central Board; the Arya Stri Samaj and Dr Omprakash. The Satyarth Prakash was published in the Burmese language in 1959. Miss Vimala Gandhi translated the tract entitled "The Message of the Arya Samaj to the World", into Burmese in 1968.

On the occasion of the centenary of the Arya Samaj, the booklet entitled "The Arya Samaj: Its Ideals and Achievements", written by Pandit Nardev Vedalankar and published by Veda Niketan (Arya Pratinidhi Sabha, South Africa), has been translated into Burmese and Hindi and distributed in Burma.

In 1968 and 1969 Mandalay became the centre of the activities organized by the Arya Pratinidhi Sabha of Rangoon. It is noteworthy that the persons who associated themselves with the functions of the Sabha were two officials of the Hindu Central Board, namely, Sri Dinanath (President) and Sri Surajprasad Khanna (Secretary). The discourses of Sri Goutam Bhardwaj on the Upanishads had such a charm that the listeners were kept spellbound. There was an organized programme of religious lectures and very valuable contributions were made by Sri Rasiklal Atmaram Gandhi, Dr Omprakash and other learned persons.

In 1969 there was also a concentration of religious activities in the districts of Zeyawadi and Kywaktaga. A special youth programme

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was organized comprising Sandhya, Upasana, Havan and physical culture. In the talks that were arranged, the teachings of the Vedas and the lives of some great men were emphasized to provide religious inspiration to the young people. A new series of pamphlets that outlined the teachings of the Vedas in a simple form, was published and distributed. It seemed to have captivated the interest of the younger generation.

In 1970, the fifth annual conference of the Pratinidhi Sabha was held in the town of Maymyo. Four days prior to the conference, several districts of Burma participated in the religious activities that were under the direct guidance of the Arya Pratinidhi Sabha of Rangoon. Emanating from the deliberations of the youth section of the Sabha, the first of a regular newsletter, "Jagriti" (Awakening of Aryan Youth), appeared in August, 1970. The publication appears in Hindi and Burmese. Sri Ramlal, B.Sc. (Sahitya Ratna) and Sri Shambhunath Das Gupta, B.Sc., are the editors. The articles that are published deal mainly with religion, culture and physical well-being of youth. In 1971 the Sabha published an Aryan calendar. The Sarvadeshik Arya Pratinidhi Sabha and other organizations supply religious and cultural literature from time to time for use in Burma. This gesture is greatly appreciated by the recipients.

The sixth annual conference of the Sabha was held in May, 1971, in the town of Zeyawadi. In this district of Burma there are about twenty-five thousand settlers of Behari origin. Their way of life has a marked Indian character. Five thousand Satsang-prayer tracts were published on this occasion and they were very well received by the Hindu community. The demand for the youth newsletter and the Aryan calendar has increased to a great extent.

In 1972 the seventh annual conference of the Sabha which was held in Taunggyi was a remarkable success. All the districts of Burma were fully represented. The delegates were very impressed to find the members of the Sikh community co-operating whole-heartedly with the Arya Samaj, particularly in extending a warm welcome to all the visitors.

It seems that there has arisen a new spirit in all the Arya Samajes of Burma. Vedic preachers are more in evidence; religious literature is being published regularly; and generally there is a greater sense of purpose in all the activities of the Arya Samajes. In Rangoon, in addition to the centralized religious meetings, weekly family satsangs (gatherings) have become a way of life. Similar satsangs have come into prominence and are continually increasing in Lashio, Zeyawadi, Mandalay, Myitkyina and other districts as well.

The eighth annual conference of the Sabha was held in May, 1974, in Mandalay. It also marked the centenary of the Arya Samaj and received the support of all the affiliated Arya Samajes in Burma.

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ARYA SAMAJ - RANGOON

The Arya Samaj of Rangoon was founded by Swami Brahmanand, a Bengali Sannyasi. The first president of the Samaj was Shri Bannerji and the secretary was Shri Basu, and both were Bengali gentlemen. Later some Tamil and Telegu persons also joined the Samaj, and among them a person by the name of Brahmiya has gone on record as a very strong member. Some Gujerati rice-traders and people who came from the United Province of India also joined the Samaj in the early days. Shri Devji Sharma, a wealthy Gujerati rice-trader, served as president of the Samaj. He was well-versed in the teachings of Swami Dayanand and the Arya Samaj became very popular during his time.

Dr Gurudutt Saria came to Burma in 1904. He joined the medical service of the Government of Burma. He was a leading figure in the Arya Samaj movement in Rangoon and Burma till 1964 when he died at the age of ninety-four years. He was responsible for the collection of funds and the construction of a very impressive building of the Arya Samaj in 1933. The property is now valued at six lakh Rupees.

Shri Halker, a Maharashtrian advocate, was the president of the Samaj for many years. The Arya Kumar Sabha and the Arya Stri Samaj had affiliated to the Arya Samaj. Seven Arya Kumar night schools were conducted. The D.A.V. College was in a separate building. The Samaj also carried out relief and social work whenever the need arose. The Arya Samaj was very active because it comprised a strong body of Hindu workers until the Second World War. The Samaj was registered in 1934 on the advice of Shri Rampersad Singh. During the war the building and property of the Samaj were looked after and saved by Shri Nijanand, Shri Bholaram, Shri Guatam Bhardwaj and Shri L.B. Lathia. After the war the persons who took part in reorganizing the Arya Samaj were Shri Bishandas, Shri K.B. Sharma, Dr Omprakash, Shri Ramraj Singh, Dr S.L. Loomba, Shri K.N. Rai, Shri R.S.D. Joshi, Shri L.B. Lathia, Shri Shyamlal Bharti and Shri Govind Bhai Patel.

At present the Arya Samaj has a three-storeyed building with a large hall and a gallery for social gatherings, twenty rest-rooms for travellers and another twenty rooms which are rented on a permanent basis. The Arya Samaj dispensary is managed by Dr B. Nath as medical officer and Shri B.N. Buggal who is the secretary. The D.A.V. School which is also a three-storeyed building, was nationalised by the Government of Burma in 1966. The School now follows the curriculum of the Education Department and the medium of instruction is Burmese. The present working committee is headed by Dr Omprakash as the president and Shri Shes Narayan Verma who is the secretary.

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ARYA SAMAJ - MANDALAY

Arya Samaj Mandir

ARYA SAMAJ - RANGOON

Arya Bhawan

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ARYA SAMAJ - MANDALAY

In 1890 a number of Punjabis who went to settle in Burma had already come under the influence of the Arya Samaj in India. These people were engaged in the building of railways and canals. They were also employed in various capacities in the service of the government. They wished to establish the Arya Samaj in Burma and in the early stages they held their satsangs in a railway compartment and celebrated some of the Hindu festivals. In 1909 they rented a room for the work of the Arya Samaj which they had already founded. Mr Ishwardas Guruwada, Mr Mohan Singh Thakadar and Mr Ramdev Mehra were some of the pioneers of the Arya Samaj movement in Mandalay. In 1914 Mr Mohan Singh donated a property with a building to the Arya Samaj. The income from this property was used for the maintenance of orphans, including their education. The Arya Samaj thus became very popular and since then it has continued to render very commendable service in the field of social welfare.

In 1925 Mr Ishwar Singh donated a property worth five thousand Rupees to the Arya Samaj. A sum of twenty-five thousand Rupees was collected and a double-storeyed Arya mandir was soon completed. The premises included a library and a reading room. Accommodation was also provided for the activities of a Bal Sabha. During the Second World War the mandir of the Samaj was razed to the ground. But the work of the Samaj has commenced once again and a very rapid progress has been made. The mandir has been reconstructed with the help of the enthusiastic members of the Samaj at a cost of two thousand Rupees.

D.A.V. COLLEGE

As the need for education grew among the Indian settlers, the Samaj established schools and thousands of children were provided with primary education. The children from the neighbouring villages were also accommodated in these schools. Later a D.A.V. High School complete with a hostel was built and it maintained a very high standard of education. As the people of Mandalay became keener to educate their girls as well, the Arya Samaj established a separate girls' school.

ARYA SAMAJ CENTRAL

In 1935 an additional body, the Arya Samaj Central, was formed. This Samaj constructed a three-storeyed building in the town of Mandalay. Mr Ramlall Guruwada, Dr Ganeshdas and Mr Ramdev Mehra are the pioneers of the Arya Samaj Central.

During the Second World War the work of the Arya Samaj was disrupted as a result of the Japanese aggression. In 1946 the work of the Arya Samaj commenced with a renewed vigour and the two Samajes

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decided to combine their efforts to achieve a greater measure of success in the post-war reconstruction period.

The work of the Arya Samaj in Mandalay is now supported by the Arya Stri Samaj, the Arya Kumar Sabha and the Arya Kumarika Sabha. These Samajes are doing laudable work among the women and youth of Mandalay. The Arya Samaj has also established an orphanage in Mandalay where many destitute children from the other parts of Burma as well are found. The Samaj provides food, clothing and education to the children at this orphanage.

Burma gained its independence in 1948. But in 1968 the country was taken over by a revolutionary government and the Indian settlers of Burma suffered another serious setback after the Second World War and the work of the Samaj halted once more. The Government carried out a programme of nationalization and the Arya Samaj lost the control it had exercised over its schools. The girls' school of the Samaj has been converted into a prayer centre where religious classes are being conducted. Hindi classes have also been established on the basis of the syllabuses and examinations of the Wardha Rashtra Bhasha Prachar Samiti. Fortunately the Arya Samaj has now been able to revert to its normal activities and there are signs of good progress.

ZEYAWADI

The Arya Samaj was first established in the locality of Jaipur in the district of Zeyawadi in 1958. The officials were Sri Shiv Pujan Goswami (patron), Sri Ganga Prasad (president) and Sri Ramjanma Singh (secretary). A special conference was held in Zeyawadi in October, 1959. Among those who took part were Dr Omprakash (Secretary, Arya Pratinidhi Sabha, Rangoon) and Sri Dinanath (President, All Burma Hindu Central Board). The Sanatan Dharma Svyam Savak Sangh was represented by Sri Ramprakash Dhiri. About three thousand local residents also attended. The persons responsible for the success of the conference were Sri Chandradutt (Sahitya Ratna), Sri Kedarnath (Visharada) and their associates.

Not long afterwards, an Arya Samaj was formed in Zeyawadi. In 1960 Mahatma Anand Swami visited Zeyawadi and strengthened the work of the Arya Samaj in this district. In 1965 the President of the Arya Samaj of Mandalay officially opened the building that had been completed by the Arya Samaj of Zeyawadi. The persons who were actively engaged in the fund-raising efforts of the Samaj were Sri Chandradutt and Sri Kedarnath. It is noteworthy that the Stri Samaj of Mandalay also supported the campaign to raise funds.

The Samaj of Zeyawadi has organized a school and weekly religious meetings are held. A library has also been established. The health clinic that was organized continued for about two years. A rest-room was provided for travellers. The youth of Zeyawadi have shown a keen interest in the Yuvak Sabha organized by the Arya Samaj. With Zey-

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awadi as the headquarters, Arya Samajes have been formed in the localities of Sahadev Nagar, Tiwarichak, Ram Gahan Tola, Jaipur, Nyawwinda, Ram Pur, Kyogains, Keila and Newein. Vedic mandirs (temples) have already been built in two of these villages and a foundation for a mandir has been laid in Sahadev Nagar. The other localities have regular weekly religious gatherings at the homes of members.

Among the settlers of Indian origin in Zeyawadi, there are many doctors, engineers and other graduates who have moved to the various districts of Burma and they are making valuable contributions in several fields. In the short period of its existence, the Arya Samaj of Zeyawadi has exerted a tremendous influence in the religious and cultural life of the district. At present the president of the central Zeyawadi Arya Samaj is Sri Raja Prasad (Sahitya Ratna) and Sri Baliram, B.Sc., is the secretary.

ARYA SAMAJ - MYITKYINA

Myitkyina is situated in the north of Burma. As early as 1905 a railway link was established by the British Government between Rangoon and Myitkyina. From about the same time, immigrants from India began to arrive in Myitkyina as government servants, military men, cattle farmers, agriculturists and traders. The Hindu religion obviously formed a part of the religion of the new settlers. The Arya Samaj was founded in Myitkyina in about 1912 and the pioneers of the Arya Samaj movement were Sri Balkrishna Kapila, Sri Indu Singh, Sri Bhai Singh, Sri Prithivi Singh, Sri Roop Rai and Sri Rameshwar Dayal. A Samaj building was erected not long after the establishment of the Samaj.

In 1919 the D.A.V. School of Myitkyina was completed. The building was two-storeyed. It had a library and a section of the premises was available to renters. Unfortunately, the place was destroyed by bombing raids that took place during the Second World War. A temporary structure was built in 1946. But through the efforts of Sri Bharumala Kapoor, Sri Hardwar Lal and Sri Pardev Singh the new building programme of the Samaj was brought to fruition. At the moment, in addition to the mandir, there are quarters which have been rented. The property of the Samaj could be valued at about three lakh Rupees.

Weekly religious services are held and the importance of the Vedic Dharma is emphasized. There are two Hindi schools with two paid and two unpaid teachers. In the surrounding areas of Myitkyina Sri Brahmadutt, B.A. (Visharada), has taken personal control of the arrangements for the teaching of Hindi. As a prominent resident of Myitkyina, he has been actively associated with the work of the Arya Samaj. The Vedic sanskars have become popular among the members

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of the Samaj. The Vedic followers of other districts are generally invited during the religious festivals. The significance of the festivals, as accepted by the Arya Samaj, is emphasized.

In Myitkyina there are about fifteen thousand Hindus and among them the Gurkha families are in the majority. Temples have been built in many of the localities. There is a school for the teaching of Sanskrit. The Hindu community has been very impressed by the copies of the satsang manual distributed by the Arya Pratinidhi Sabha of Burma. The bhajans and kirtans are held on the basis of this booklet. The officials of the Samaj at present are Sri Angurilal (president), Sri Krishnakumar and Sri Tilakchand (secretaries) and Sri R.S. Nada (treasurer).

ARYA SAMAJ - MOGOK

In 1912 Sri Kaluram Sharma was the chief clerk of the Mogok Forestry Department. He was a devoted follower of Maharishi Dayanand. He had organized a free Hindi school at his home. The children were taught the religious beliefs of Swami Dayanand in a simple form. In 1928 Mehta Jaimini visited Mogok. Sri Dwarkanath was greatly impressed by the teachings of Mehta Jaimini and allowed the use of his house, without any charge, for the purpose of spreading the message of the Vedic Dharma. This activity continued for about ten years. Thereafter an Arya Samaj was formed and suitable quarters were rented.

In 1943 Sri Narsingh Das Growar donated to the Samaj a piece of land with a building on it. During the war a number of people returned to India but many citizens from the other towns of Burma came to reside in Mogok. Later Sri Harvanshlal Gandhi bought a piece of land with a double-storeyed building on it for the Arya Samaj. In 1955 Sri Madan Mohan Vidyasagar arrived in Mogok. His religious lectures aroused a great deal of interest in the Arya Samaj with the result that it became possible to erect a new building in place of the one that was destroyed during the war. The building was officially opened by Mahatma Dhiran Das. In 1960 Mahatma Anand Swami toured Mogok. His lectures on the Vedic Dharma created a tremendous impression on the people. Plans were soon made by the Arya Samaj for a three-storeyed building. The new building was officially opened on the 18th October, 1967, by the Secretary of the Arya Pratinidhi Sabha (Burma), Dr Omprakash. A Hindi school has been provided and already about one thousand eight hundred pupils have received tuition.

The Samaj property is worth over three lakh Rupees. In addition to the weekly services all religious festivals are observed. The present officials are Sri Harvanshlal Gandhi (president) and Sri Krishnachand Gandhi (secretary).

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ARYA SAMAJ-CHAUK

Chauk is a well-known town on the banks of the River Irrawaddy. In 1940 an Arya Samaj was established in Chauk by Dr. H.L. Khurana. In 1962 a new mandir was constructed in place of the old building which was destroyed during the war. At present the total value of the property is well over a lakh Rupees. Provision has been made for the teaching of Hindi and weekly religious services are held. All the festivals are celebrated with great enthusiasm. The present officials are Vishwanath Gupta (president) and Baliram Varma (secretary).

ARYA SAMAJ - KALAW

In 1920 Swami Parmanand arrived in Kalaw as a Vedic preacher. As a result of his persuasion and the generosity of a group of local residents, a Vedic mandir was built. Immediately thereafter a Hindi school was opened. The present officials are Sri Mothiram (president) and Sri Girdharilal (secretary). An Arya Youth Sabha has also been organized. Weekly services are held and all religious festivals are celebrated. The property of the Samaj is valued at sixty thousand Rupees.

ARYA SAMAJ - MAYMYO

An Arya Samaj was founded in Maymyo in 1912 and some of the pioneers of the movement were Sri Prabhudayal, Sri Vejay Singh, Sri Ramsarup Sahani and Sri Varduman Singh. The property of the Samaj is valued at about one lakh Rupees. A Hindi school has been organized; weekly services are held; and the religious festivals are observed. Family gatherings are also a feature of the religious work undertaken by the Samaj. The present officials are Sri Haripal Swarup (president) and Sri Ramcharan (secretary).

ARYA SAMAJ - TATHEGON (KYAWKTAGA)

The Arya Samaj of Tathegon (Kyawktaga) was established in 1925 through the efforts of Sri Hiralal and his associates, namely Sri Shersingh, Sri Moonolal, Sri Sitaram and others. A great deal of credit for the success of the Arya Samaj in Tathegon goes to Sri Kanhayalal Misra of India, who was engaged in the teaching of Vedic hymns while he was on a lecture-tour of Burma. Other persons who were actively engaged in the work of the Samaj were Sri Sampatilal, Sri Janakinath and Sri Kanhayalal. The present officials are Sri Shivalochan (president), Sri Moonilal (secretary) and Sri Shivapujan (treasurer).

ARYA SAMAJ - SHIVAPUR (KYAWKTAGA)

In 1952 through the efforts of the Vedic preacher, Sri Chandradutt of the Arya Pratinidhi Sabha of Burma, and Sri Bhagwandas Gangawani of Rangoon an Arya Samaj was formed in Shivapur (Kyawktaga). Weekly services are held at the homes of members. Sri Ramna-

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gina has donated a piece of land for the building of a Samaj mandir. Sri Bhagwandas Gangawani has offered encouragement to the cause by taking a personal interest in the building of the mandir.

ARYA SAMAJ - YENANGYAUNG

The Arya Samaj of Yenangaung is in the Magwe district of Burma. The Samaj has a simple, two-storeyed building. During the Second World War many people returned to India. Today the Samaj has only twenty members. It is affiliated to the Arya Pratinidhi Sabha of Rangoon. The members of the Samaj have an unshaken faith in the Vedic religion and they are determined to ensure its continuity in Yenangyaung. Provision has been made for free education. The Samaj has a Hindi school and religious training of the children is emphasized.

Weekly services are held to arouse interest in religion in the Indian community. The Samaj plays an important role in the propagation of Vedic culture, religion and brotherhood. The present officials are Shri Kansi Ram (president), Shri Surya Prakash (vice-president), Shri Satya Paul (secretary), Shri N.B. Singh (assistant secretary) and Shri K.C. Ratee (treasurer).

ARYA SAMAJ - NAMTU (BURMA)

The Arya Samaj of Namtu was established in 1934. It is affiliated to the All Burma Aryan League. The Arya Kumar Sabha was founded by the Pracharak Pratinidhi Sabha of Rangoon in 1969. During the Second World War, the activities of the Samaj were disrupted and their building was destroyed. In 1952 a simple hall was rebuilt on the old foundation in the centre of the Namtu township. There is a Hindi school for Indian children. Instruction is given in the teaching of the Vedas as outlined by Swami Dayanand. Every Sunday the Samaj holds its congregation. The festivals celebrated by the Samaj are Raksha Bandhan, Vishi Bodh Ratri, Makar Sankrantri and Arya Samaj Sthapna Divasu.

Among the pioneers who helped in the building programme were Shri Maya Das, Shri Ram Dhan, Shri Anant Ram Patro and Shri Malik Chand. The officials who served the Samaj from 1969 to 1971 were Shri Jagdeesh Kumar (president) and Shri Dalip Chand (secretary), and those who were elected for the period 1972 to 1974 are Shri Ram Prakash (president) and Shri Bhagavan Das (secretary).

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CHAPTER XI B

ARYA SAMAJ — BANGKOK (THAILAND) AND SINGAPORE

The founding of Arya Samaj in Bangkok can be attributed to an unexpected but an interesting incident. Shri Gajhar Bhuj discovered a copy of the Satyarth Prakash (Light of Truth) at the humble home of an acquaintance. Shri Palakdhari Singh and Shri Ramdev Singh were also impressed with the teachings of Swami Dayanand Saraswati as contained in the Light of Truth. Various persons assembled daily to participate in the reading and discussion of this book and the message soon spread among the people around.

It finally led to the establishment of the Vedic Dharma Pracharni Sabha in Bangkok on 5th May, 1920. The aims and objects of the Samaj were based on the ten fundamental principles of the Arya Samaj. Weekly gatherings were arranged for the propagation of the Vedic religion. Many homes became the focal points for the meeting of members for the dissemination and consolidation of the teachings of the Vedas as expounded in the Light of Truth. The first officials of the Sabha were Shri Ramdev Singh (president), Shri Indradev Singh (vice-president) and Shri Palakdhari Singh (secretary). Five persons were selected to serve as preachers. The word "Pracharni" itself indicated that the main aim of the Sabha was to spread the light of truth.

The eagerness of the participants gave rise to the problem of accommodation for the weekly congregations. All members of the Sabha became keenly interested in purchasing land for the purpose of building a Vedic mandir (temple). Shri Sarajuprasad Lipati was given the unfettered responsibility of negotiating and making the necessary arrangements to achieve this aim of the Sabha. The Indian settlers in Bangkok showed a tremendous interest in the project and an early completion of the spacious mandir was assured. It stands on a piece of land which is two acres in extent, as a monument to the Arya Samaj movement in the country, and it has given a sense of pride to the followers of the Vedic Dharma. The Samaj also owns a library. The total estimated value of the property of the Samaj is about twelve lakh rupees.

In 1922 the name of the Sabha was changed to Arya Samaj and in 1923 the third anniversary of its establishment was celebrated under the leadership of Shri Rambali Singh. The members were filled with enthusiasm and joy on this happy occasion. On 23rd March, 1923, the newly-formed Arya Samaj affiliated with the Arya Pratinidhi Sabha of Uttar Pradesh in India.

At the moment the Arya Samaj has sixty members. Religious lectures are organised by the Samaj whenever persons learned in Vedic scriptures visit the country on invitation, or independently.

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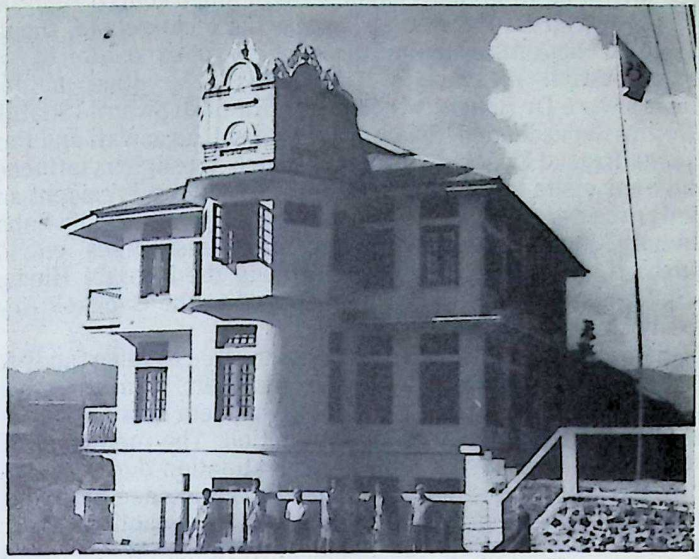
MOGOK ARYA SAMAJ - BURMA



Arya Samaj Mandir

ARYA SAMAJ - SINGAPORE

Arya Samaj Mandir

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In 1925 Mehta Jaimini and Thakur Pravin Singh toured Bangkok and created a great impression among the local people, though each person chose his own inimitable method of exposition to convey the eternal message of the Vedas. The other notable preachers were Dr Bhagatram Sahagal, Ramesh Swami (Snatak) and Swami Sarvadanand. Swami Dhruvanand Saraswati and Pandit Ganga Prasad Upadhyaya exerted a strong religious influence during their visits to Bangkok. The former was the President and the latter the Secretary of the Sarvadeshik Arya Pratinidhi Sabha of India. Mahatma Anand Swami gave discourses on the Upanishads. He gained a following among the Punjabi Hindus. Pandit Nandlal (Vanprasthi) who belonged to the Bangkok Arya Samaj became a dedicated preacher.

The Samaj organized a local relief committee to raise funds for the victims of the Bihar Earthquake disaster. Many members joined the movement that was organized by Neta Subhas Chandra Bose to free India from foreign domination. The members also served in the Indian army with great distinction during the Second World War. The Samaj gave financial assistance to several schools and colleges in India, which have been established in the name of the Arya Samaj. The Bangkok Arya Samaj has always co-operated with the Sarvadeshik Arya Pratinidhi Sabha (Delhi) and the Arya Pratinidhi Sabha of Lucknow. The appeals for funds made by them were always answered.

In this distant land of Bangkok, the message of Swami Dayanand has found acceptance. The Arya Samaj organizes regular meetings and festivals are celebrated. The anniversary of the Samaj is observed annually on the day of Holi with a great deal of jubilation.

ARYA SAMAJ — SINGAPORE

The Arya Samaj of Singapore was founded in 1927. It is a registered body. There are three hundred and forty-three members at present and the resident preacher is Pandit Satyapal Pathak who is from Amritsar in India. During the Second World War, the Japanese occupation of Singapore interrupted the activities of the Arya Samaj.

The foundation stone of the new premises was laid by Shri Yogendra Krishna Puri, the High Commissioner for India in Singapore, on 18th March, 1961. In order to make the building a prestigious landmark and an important cultural centre for the Aryan community of Singapore, the members of the Samaj made financial contributions and also offered their personal services. The three-storeyed building was officially opened by Shri Moolamall Sachdev of Bangkok on 26th June, 1963. The D. A. V. Hindi school functions in the evening. A number of students attend the classes and take advantage of learning Hindi. The Samaj also has a Vedic library.

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Since 1964 many distinguished personalities like Swami Dhruvanand Saraswati, Anand Swami, Pandit Nandlal Vanprasthi and Pandit Shyam Sunder Snatak visited Singapore and the Arya Samaj arranged for lectures to be delivered by them to propagate the Vedic philosophy.

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CHAPTER XIIA

ARYA SAMAJ IN SURINAM

The Arya Samaj was initially established in Surinam in 1911 when Prof. Bhai Parmanand, a Vedic missionary from India, visited the West Indies. Pandit Kunjbehari Tripati who came under the influence of Bhai Parmanand in Guyana, established the Arya Samaj movement in Surinam. Two citizens of Saramacca, Mr Dalasingar Avilak and Bhai Kalika, while they were in Guyana, were also deeply impressed by the teachings of the Vedas as preached by Bhai Parmanand. They brought back the message of the Vedic religion to the district of Saramacca in Surinam.

Pandit Ramprasad Shukla and Babu K. Shivarajsingh were the early pioneers of the Arya Samaj movement in Surinam. Babu Jagmohansingh also took an active part in disseminating the teachings of the Arya Samaj. He participated in religious debates in support of the Vedic religion. In 1924 he organized a Mahayajna in Surinam. Followers of the Arya Samaj from many parts of the country attended the performance of this yajna. The occasion was characterised by a spirit of dedication to the spirit of the ancient Vedic dharma. A similar Mahayajna was organized in December, 1925, by Babu Shivarajsingh. The yajna was performed by Pandit Ganeshdutt of Demerara and it continued for a week. Inspiring lectures were delivered on the occasion by Pandit Ramprasad Shukla and Pandit Chandrashekar.

ARYA DEWAKAR MAHA SABHA

Pandit Mehta Jaimini, B.A., LL.B., visited Guyana in 1929. His welcome was organized by Mr Ramnarayan. Mehtaji also visited Surinam during his tour. The people at all the centres where he appeared were greatly impressed by the depth of his learning and his message of the Vedic religion. Mr Kholasar Shukla and Babu Hirasingh co-operated with Mehtaji in establishing the Arya Dewakar Maha Sabha in 1929. In 1930 the Sabha was registered as a religious body.

A total sum of five thousand Rupees was donated to the Arya Dewakar Maha Sabha by Babu Balrajsingh, Pandit Mathuraprasad and Babu Shivarajsingh. The money was utilized to purchase a plot of land. Other persons closely associated with the project were Mr Ramprasad Shukla, Babu Hirasingh and Mr Baijnath Sahu. The officials who took control of the Sabha during this momentous period were Babu Hirasingh (president), Babu Chetram Singh (secretary), Mr Chedie Somaru (treasurer), Mr Mathura Maharaj (librarian) and Pandit Chandrikaprasad (supervisor). Today Arya Dewakar Maha Sabha has become well-established with vast assets. Many branches are affiliated to the Sabha. Mr Ramdev Soohawan donated a plot of land to the Sabha in 1946. Both Hindi and Dutch are taught in the

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school which has been erected on this site. The Sohansingh High School was built by the Sabha in memory of the late Mr Sohansingh whose son donated six thousand Rupees towards the building project. Many other schools are owned by the Sabha.

In 1930 a Bhajan Mandali was formed and Pandit Pyarelal became its president. Mr S. Kaulasar Shukla, Mr Vanshi Girdhari and Babu Manusingh took an active part in the religious work of the Mandali. Pandit Ramprasad Shukla made it a regular practice to preach on every Sunday in the mandir that belonged to the Arya Dewakar Maha Sabha. In 1932 arrangements were made for the training of Vedic priests. The Sabha also established an orphanage in 1933.

In 1956 the Arya Dewakar Maha Sabha proposed to build a new mandir. The president of the Sabha, Babu Chetram Singh, donated a thousand Rupees towards this project while Mr Jaymangal contributed five hundred Rupees. The support received from the community was most encouraging.

In 1967 the foundation of a second orphanage was laid by the Sabha. The support given to this undertaking by the Mahila Arya Samaj is worthy of note. The construction of the orphanage was entrusted to three prominent persons, namely, Pandit Ramlakhan, Pandit Ramroop Arya and Mr Ramnarayan Jhawoo. A substantial donation was also given by the Dutch Government towards the project.

Mr Udairajsingh Varma served the Arya Dewakar Maha Sabha as its president. He was dedicated to the work of the Sabha. He wrote a book entitled "An Introduction to the Arya Samaj" in Dutch and it was published by his wife, Mrs Varma. When he died his cremation ceremony was performed by Pandit Bhaskaranand of India. This was the first cremation authorized by the local government. A crematorium has now been built in his name. Two other illustrious names recorded in the annals of the Arya Dewakar Maha Sabha are those of Mrs Chaderdhey Jhawoo and a student leader, Bhai Atmaprakash. Mr J.R. Ayodhya is the president of the Sabha at the moment.

The Arya Mahila Samaj was established in 1948. It assisted the orphanage established by the Arya Dewakar Maha Sabha and took a keen interest in preaching the Vedic religion. Mrs Mangalvanshi who was suitably qualified to deliver lectures on the tenets of the Vedic dharma was entrusted with the task of spreading the message of the Vedas. There has been continued progress in the activities of the Arya Mahila Samaj which has also interested itself in the advancement of Hindi. There are about four hundred members and Mrs Udaipurajsingh is the president.

The Arya Dewakar Pracharak Mandal has rendered a service of great merit in Surinam in the field of the Vedic religion and the Hindi language. The chairman at the moment is Pandit R. Kalideen. Pandit Ramroop Ramcharan is the chairman of the Arya Dewakar Advisory

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Committee which is responsible for giving expert opinion and guidance to the Arya Dewakar Maha Sabha. The Arya Yuvak Dal of Paramaribo is a branch of the Sabha. Mr Hariprasad Sahathu has provided this organization with a vigorous leadership.

In the history of the Arya Samaj movement in Surinam, Mata Mahadevi (wife of a distinguished pioneer of the Arya Samaj, Pandit Ramprasad Shukla) occupies a position of great veneration. She has been very closely associated with the Arya Pratinidhi Sabha of Surinam. Her contribution of five thousand Rupees made it possible for the Sarvadeshik Arya Sabha to send Pandit Ayodhya Prasad to Surinam.

The Indian settlers in Surinam belonged to the lower economic group and the Hindus among them lacked a strong religious background. In 1930, in a population of thirty-six thousand Indians in Surinam, fourteen thousand had converted to the Christian religion. But fifty years later, as a result of the Arya Samaj movement, there were only two thousand Christians in a population of one hundred and forty-two thousand Indians.

NICKERIE ARYA SAMAJ

Nieuw Nickerie is a coastal town in Surinam. The message of the Arya Samaj first reached Nickerie in 1926 and an Arya Samaj was established in the place. Among the pioneers of the Arya Samaj in Nickerie were Mr Awadhraj, Mr Udairaj Singh Varma and Mr Kunjbeharie. The Arya Samaj mandir was built in Nickerie in 1931. Hindi classes are being conducted there in addition to the weekly satsangs. Other notable names in the history of the Arya Samaj in Nickerie are the Premchand family, Mr Baldevprasad Tiwari, Mr Jwalaprasad. Mrs Draupadi Devi, Pandit Bhailal, Mr Gobardhan, Mr Koleker Shukla and the Bharat family. Mr Bharat Kumar, the owner of the Bharatodaya printing press in Nickerie, is a dedicated follower of Swami Dayanand and he has undertaken to propagate the Hindi language.

HINDI IN SURINAM

About fifty percent of the population of Surinam is Hindi-speaking. They arrived in Surinam over a century ago mainly from Uttar Pradesh and Bihar in India. Babu Mahatam Singh has taken on the responsibility of establishing centres of Hindi teaching in Surinam. As Hindi is spoken by almost the entire population, there is a possibility of Hindi becoming the national language of Surinam when the country gains its independence. Mr Jagnath Lakshman, a leading figure in the political life of the country, has campaigned for Hindi to be given the recognition it deserves.

Mrs R.S. Hubba, a member of the Arya Mahila Samaj of Surninam, has shown a keen interest in promoting the Hindi language in Holland

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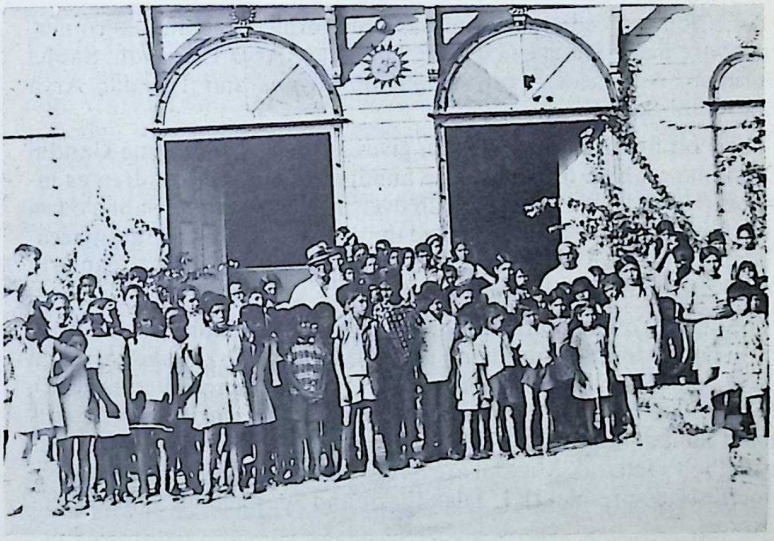
PRANTIK ARYA PRATINIDHI SABHA - PARAMARIBO - SURINAME

Vedic Temple

GEMEENTE ARYA PRATINIDHI SABHA, SURINAM



Orphanage

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where the teachings of Swami Dayanand are also being preached. Mrs D. Rasiyawan, the treasurer of the Arya Mahila Samaj (Surinam) has made a contribution to the teaching of Hindi in Holland. Mr Rameshwar, the ex-chairman of the Arya Samaj in Holland, has gained popularity in Surinam. Mrs Mangalvanshi has now associated herself with the Arya Samaj in Holland and has become a dedicated exponent of the Hindu religion and culture in this country.

Pandit Shivaratan who owns a Hindi printing press in Surinam, has for the past decade published the **Arya Dewakar,** a Hindi periodical. He has made a noteworthy contribution to the Hindi language.

ARYA PRATINIDHI SABHA SURINAM

The Arya Pratinidhi Sabha Surinam was established on 13th October, 1935, and it was recognized by the Government of Surinam as a legal body on 17th April, 1945. When Pandit Ayodhya Prasad arrived from India in Surinam he gave his encouragement for the formation of the Arya Pratinidhi Sabha Surinam. Some of the pioneers of the Arya Samaj in Surinam, who co-operated in founding the Sabha, were Mr Rampersad Sukul, Mr G.B. Rampersad and Dr Kaullesar Sukul among others. The Sabha was recognized by the Arya Pratinidhi Sabha (New Delhi).

Local pandits are engaged in preaching the Vedic religion in Surinam. Missionaries who came to the country on behalf of the Sarvadeshik Sabha were Pandit Shastri, Pt. Shrutikant, Pt. Ayodhya Prasad, Pt. Ramsahai and Pandit Patanjal.

A Caribbean Vedic Parishad has been formed and annual conferences are held. The participating bodies are Arya Pratinidhi Sabha Surinam, American Aryan League of Guyana and Trinidad Arya Pratinidhi Sabha.

The Pratinidhi Sabha Surinam gives aid to the Mahatma Gandhi Orphanage which has about one hundred and eighty children as inmates. Hindi lessons are given all over the country. The Sabha owns and is in charge of Paramaribo and the district mandirs in Saramacca, Commewijne and Houttuin. Vedic yajnas are performed regularly and Vedic marriages are encouraged.

The present office bearers of the Arya Pratinidhi Sabha Surinam are Pt. Sewpal Moerlie (president), Mr H. Mungra, Ch. Tilakdharie and Dr. J. de Nie (vice-president), J.S. Mungra (secretary/treasurer), H. Dayala and Dr S. Ch. Mungra (assistant secretaries), Pt. Soesilchand Sankar and Pt. B.A. Kalloe (librarians). The pandits who comprise the Pracharak Mandal are Sewsankar Gadjradj (president), S. Moerlie (vice-president), I. Tilakdharie and Soesilchand Sankar (secretaries).

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CHAPTER XIIB

ARYA SAMAJ IN TRINIDAD

It was after the Indian Mutiny of 1857 and mainly as a result of the recurrent famines and abject poverty that a great number of Indians began to emigrate to other lands. The second half of the nineteenth century saw a mass exodus of Indians seeking employment in other parts of the world. One area that attracted many of them was the West Indies. Here they were promised a land of plenty, where they would be able to work for a few years and amass enough wealth to take back to India. That they were disillusioned upon arrival in this part of the world is now a matter of history.

From 1845 to 1917 more than one hundred and forty-three thousand Indians left the shores of India and arrived in Trinidad as indentured labourers. The vast majority of them came from the United Province (now Uttar Pradesh) and Bihar in northern India. Later about twenty-five percent of them took advantage of the free passage back to India while the others remained in Trinidad and settled on the crown lands that were offered to them in the Caroni and Naparima Plains. According to the Comins Report, in 1891 eighty-six percent of the non-Christian Indians were Hindus and thirteen percent were Muslims.

The earliest efforts to establish the Arya Samaj movement in Trinidad were made by visiting missionaries. In 1904 Pandit Tiwary and Pandit Harripersad worked in the Gasparillo Marabella area to popularize the teachings of Swami Dayanand. In 1929 Pandit Mehta Jaimini visited Trinidad as a Vedic missionary. He encouraged the construction of a building at Marabella and this made it possible for Hindi classes to be conducted.

In 1934 Pandit Ayodhya Prasad arrived in Trinidad and a new interest was aroused in the work of the Arya Samaj. He had just addressed the conference of the World Fellowship of Faiths in Chicago. He went to Trinidad while on his way back to India, on the invitation of Mr Ramdass Goswami, a Trinidadian who traded with Guyana. Mr Goswami had already taken an interest in the Arya Samaj movement in India. He introduced Pandit Ayodhya Prasad to Mr Budhbir Singh, a Port-of-Spain merchant, who prevailed upon Panditji to address a meeting of Indians at Chaguanas. The impression that he created during his first lecture, encouraged the local residents to urge Pandit Ayodhya Prasad to prolong his stay in Trinidad. He acceded to the request and remained in the country for three years and Mr Panalal Saith and Mr Seereeram Maharaj were his hosts. A remarkable feature of the work of Pandit Ayodhya Prasad was that many persons of other faiths converted to the Hindu religion by means of shuddhi.

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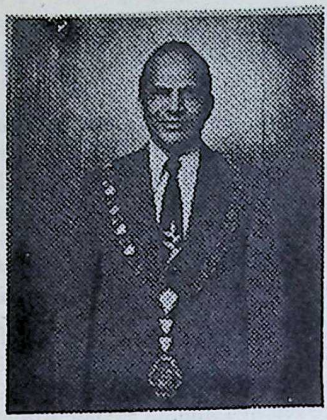
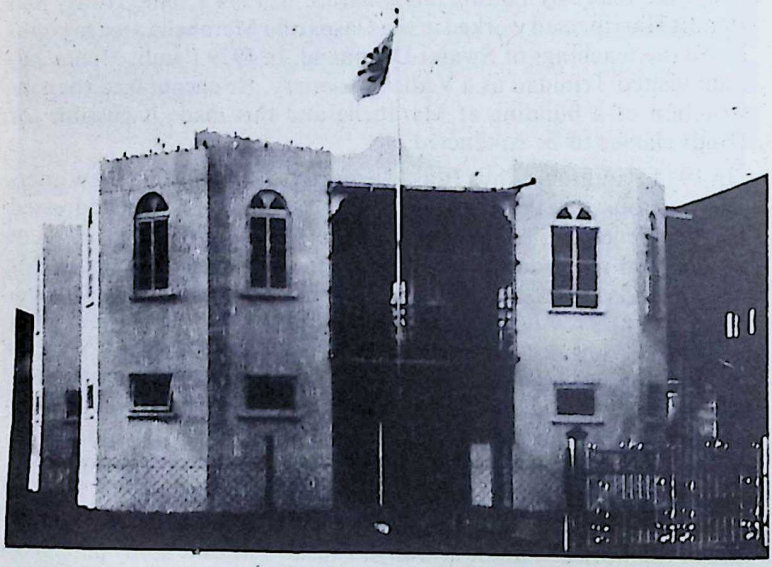
ARYA PRATINIDHI SABHA TRINIDAD



Pt. L. SHIVAPRASAD
(Mayor: Port of Spain)
Genenal Secretary: A.P.S.

Prof. H. S. ADESH, M.A.
(Sahitya Alankar)
Director: Bharatiya Vidya Sansthan, Trinidad

SKELDON ARYA SAMAJ, BERBICE (Guyana)



Arya Samaj Buildings

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Some of the earliest converts were Shorab Khan, Wahid Ali and Cumberbatch, a negro.

On Deepavali day in 1934 Pandit Ayodhya Prasad laid the foundation stone of the first Arya Samaj mandir at Chaguanas. This mandir was formally opened in May, 1935, by Pandit Satya Charran Shastri who later returned as High Commissioner of India to Trinidad. It is now called the Seereeram Memorial Mandir and it serves as a primary school. It is also the headquarters of the Arya Pratinidhi Sabha of Trinidad. There was a rapid progress in the Arya Samaj movement and assembly halls were erected at San Juan, Tunapuna, Curepe, Biche, Princes Town, Barrackpore, Penal, Avocat and Debe. With the establishment of these ten branches, the Samaj at Chaguanas was reconstituted as the Arya Pratinidhi Sabha and a Bill to recognize the organization came into effect under Statute No. 43 of 1943 of Trinidad and Tobago.

The Pratinidhi Sabha worked on a system of affiliated Samajes. The delegates of the Samajes attended the meetings of the Sabha and the right to elect the officials of the Pratinidhi Sabha was vested in them. Each affiliated Samaj was required to contribute ten percent of its annual income to the Pratinidhi Sabha. But the system has now changed and the membership of the Sabha is open to individuals. The headquarters of the Sabha are still at Chaguanas.

One of the major projects undertaken by the Arya Pratinidhi Sabha has been the building of primary schools. This task was fraught with difficulties. Rev. Natram, a Presbyterian missionary of India, who was on a lecture tour of Trinidad, criticised the Hindus for worshipping the cow. This antagonised the Hindus who together with the Muslims decided to boycott the C.M. School in Chaguanas. The children were transferred to the Government School, but owing to the overcrowding at this school, a temporary structure was built on the property of Mr Kesari Maharaj to accommodate the children.

The services of Mr Sam Supersad and Mr Shorab Khan were secured to instruct the children. Within a few months a school building was erected at Taitti Street in Chaguanas and it functioned as a private Hindu-Muslim School. Among the teachers in the school were Mr Siew Supersad and Mr Ramsumair Gabhan. The Marriot Mayhew Commission of 1931-32 visited the school and recommended a Government grant for the school. But this was not put into effect because Captain J.O. Cutteridge extended the Government School in Chaguanas, where both the pupils and teachers were absorbed.

The closing of the Hindu-Muslim school did not deter the non-Christians who were determined to build their own schools. Mr Sarran Teelucksingh, a member of the Hindu-Muslim movement, was invited to become a member of the Board of Education. After his term of office, Moulvi Ameerali took his place on the Board of Education. It was at

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this time that efforts were made to destroy the Hindu-Muslim unity that had existed, by granting a Muslim school at El Socorro. The Hindus were left alone and they had to fend for themselves. The stalwarts of the Arya Pratinidhi Sabha persevered together with the other Hindu leaders as Mr Bhadase Segan Maraj and on 21st April, 1952, the Montrose Vedic School was opened in Chaguanas. Since then the Pratinidhi Sabha has built eight more primary schools.

With the achievement of independence the Government of Trinidad and Tobago began to discourage the churches from building primary schools. The Arya Samaj was also relieved of the burden of building schools. At this time a dispute arose among the members of the Arya Pratinidhi Sabha especially with regard to the finances of the Sabha and the conduct of some of the priests. There was a court action and certain members were debarred from holding key positions in the Pratinidhi Sabha. The outcome was that the members who found their positions untenable in the Sabha formed a splinter body known as the Vedic Mission.

The new regime of the Arya Pratinidhi Sabha has made it constitutionally possible for individuals to become members of the Sabha and the system of representation by delegates has been discarded. This procedure came into effect in 1973 when the existing constitution of 1943 was revised. The Arya Pratinidhi Sabha is represented on the United Hindu Organization and it is hoped that a Caribbean Hindu Parishad will be held in 1975. The Arya Pratinidhi Sabha in Trinidad is working in close co-operation with the Arya Samaj movements in Guyana and Surinam.

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   Account prepared by J.S. Mungra (Secretary - Arya Pratinidhi Sabha Surinam)
3. Arya Samaj in Trinidad:
   Account (type-written in Hindi) prepared by Sarvadeshik Arya Pratinidhi Sabha, New Delhi.
4. **Arya Samaj in Trinidad;**
   Account prepared by Sadanan Ramnarine, B.Sc. (Eng.)

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ARYA SAMAJ IN GUYANA

EARLY YEARS

Although it is not possible to determine the exact time, the message of Swami Dayanand succeeded in reaching the shores of Guyana as well. Among the persons who contributed to the pioneering work in the Arya Samaj movement in Guyana were Pandits Ram Narayan, Bhajan Daibee, Lakshman Prasad, Gharbarran Doobay, Ganesh Prasad and Chandrashekar Sharma, all of whom were citizens of Guyana. The task undertaken by them seemed to have been a difficult one owing to the hostility shown by some individuals and certain religious organizations.

But with an undaunted spirit and an unflinching faith in the cause they has espoused, they persisted in laying the foundations of the Arya Samaj in order that the children of the land could derive the benefit of the Vedic religion. The message of the Vedas spread to the countries of Demerara and Berbice and people in all walks of life were inspired.

MISSIONARIES FROM INDIA

The Arya Samaj of Guyana owes a debt of gratitude to a number of missionaries from India for their guidance and encouragement. In 1910 the first Vedic missionary, Bhai Parmanand, arrived in Guyana. He delivered several public lectures in various parts of the country. By the time of his departure, the Arya Samaj movement in Guyana was considerably strengthened and the years that followed witnessed a progressive growth and expansion in the Aryan fold.

A number of Arya Samajes were formed, mainly in Demerara and Berbice. The first Samaj was founded in 1921 at Truimph Village by a group of dedicated persons comprising Pandit Ramnath, Mr Satnarayan, Mr Ramkhelawan and Mr Bal Gangadhar. The movement continued to gain momentum and an increasing number of people began to appreciate the Vedic teachings. The work of the Arya Samaj gained a greater impetus with the support of prominent persons such as Pandits Ramjeelall and Ramnath.

In 1929 Pandit Mehta Jaimini arrived in Guyana as the second Vedic missionary to visit the country. His influence paved the way for a centralized control and organization of the Arya Samaj movement which became a reality within a few years. After Pandit Mehta Jaimini returned to India, a new period began of missionaries visiting Guyana at shorter intervals. This became possible as a result of the keener interest of the Sarvadeshik Arya Pratinidhi Sabha in the Arya Samajes abroad. In 1935 Pandit Ayodhya Prasad arrived in Guyana

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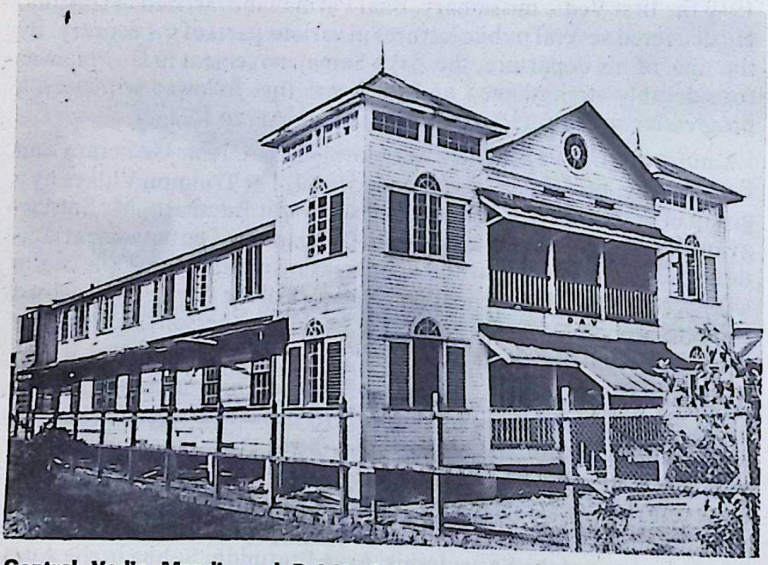
ANANDALE ARYA SAMAJ, EAST COAST, DEMERARA, Guyana

Vedic Temple

Headquarters of the AMERICAN ARYAN LEAGUE



Central Vedic Mandir and D.A.V. College, Durban Street, Georgetown, Guyana

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and he was followed by Pandit Narayan Dutt and Shrimati Janki Devi.

In 1936 Pandit Bhaskaranand, one of the foremost architects of the Arya Samaj movement in Guyana, visited the country for the first time. He remained in Guyana for ten years, during which period he preached and organized Arya Samajes throughout the country. Through his personal endeavours, the American Aryan League was established in 1937 and registered in 1938 under the friendly societies ordinance. The League has since been the parent body of all the Arya Samajes and also the centre of the activities of the Samaj in the country. Pandit Bhaskaranand was instrumental in the acquisition of land and the construction of the building for the headquarters of the American Aryan League. This building, situated in D'Urban Street, Georgetown, stands as a living memory of the work and achievement of a truly devoted missionary. After leaving Guyana in 1945, Pandit Bhaskaranand returned on two subsequent occasions (1961 and 1966) but for relatively short visits.

In 1955 a new religious zeal was infused into the Arya Samaj movement with the arrival of Pandit Usharbudh Arya. He created a new interest in the Vedic scriptures and his message was directed to both the young and old alike. His greatest achievement was the formation of the Arya Vir Dal- a body of young aspirants who dedicated themselves to the cause of the Vedic religion and selfless service to humanity. Pandit Ayra left Guyana in 1962 and returned later for a short while.

THE SAMAJ TODAY

The Arya Samaj in Guyana has a following of about forty thousand persons. Its members are spread out over the three countries of Demerara, Berbice and Essequibo. Regular prayer services are held by the Samajes. Several youth sections have been organized for the young members of the Aryan families.

Thirty-five Arya Samajes have affiliated to the American Aryan League. In 1973 the officials of the League were Mr Chunilall (president), Dr Ganraj Kumar (senior vice-president), Mr D. Ramlakhan and Mr Daljeet Gosai (junior vice-president), Mr Pertab Singh (general secretary), Pt. Parbhu Dyal and Mr B. Chandra (joint secretaries), Mr Bhairo Prashad (librarian) and Mr Mohabir Seepersaud (treasurer).

The American Aryan League is responsible for formulating the policies of the Arya Samaj. Its counterpart in the religious sphere, the Arya Pracharak Mandal (Pandits' Council) is charged with the task of seeing that the spiritual aspect of the activities of the Samaj, is conducted efficiently and in accordance with the scriptures. Pandits from the various Samajes are represented on the Pracharak Mandal. The present officials of the Mandal are Pt. Jagdeo Gosai (president), Pt.

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Ramnarine Singh (vice-president), Pt. Dewakinandan Panday (secretary), Pt. Moniram Persaud (assistant secretary) and Pandit Dharamdeo Persaud (treasurer).

The Guyana Aryan Youth League which was launched in 1973 represents the youth section of the American Aryan League. It co-operates with the parent body in its programmes and in the achievement of its objectives. The members of this Youth League play a major part in organizing the weekly and special services at the League's headquarters. They also call on other youth groups in the neighbouring districts in order to keep alive and to strengthen the bond of friendship that must exist in a well-integrated society.

The American Aryan League conducts a primary and a post-primary school in the lower section of its building. The rest of the building houses the central Vedic mandir and offices. The School, under the principalship of Mr Doodnath Persaud, commenced in 1968. It is controlled by a Board of Governors comprising Dr G. Kumar, Mr Chunilall, Mr Muneshwar, Mr Ramnandan Lall, Mr George Sookhoo, Mr Vickram Daibee, Mr Balkaran and Mr S.J. Swah.

The American Aryan League is working at the moment to bring about the unification and consolidation of the entire Arya Samaj movement in the country. Plans are well in hand to mark the centenary of the Arya Samaj in an impressive manner and an effort is being made to involve all Guyanese Aryans in this important event. In preparation for the occasion, the League's buildings have been repaired and renovated. It is hoped that the centenary of the Arya Samaj will usher in a new light and a greater understanding among the Samajes throughout the world.

HISTORICAL LANDMARKS OF ARYA SAMAJ IN GUYANA (1940 - 1975)

1940 - The Caribbean Vedic Parishad (Council) was established by the efforts of local missionaries from Trinidad, Guyana and Suriname. Their objectives were to unify the religious codes and practices of the Arya Samaj movement.

1953 - Pandit Beksh Pati Sinha (now Dr Mahaguru in America) arrived as Vedic missionary.

1955 - The Guyana Oriental College was established by the visiting preacher, Pandit Shruti Kant, M.A. (Vidyalankar).

1956 - Pandit Usharbudh Arya (now Dr) arrived in Guyana. The Guyana Arya Vir Dal and the Mahaicony Ashram High School were established. Plans, programmes and policies of the Arya Samaj movement were fully reviewed and rules were drafted for the Arya Pratinidhi Sabha of Guyana.

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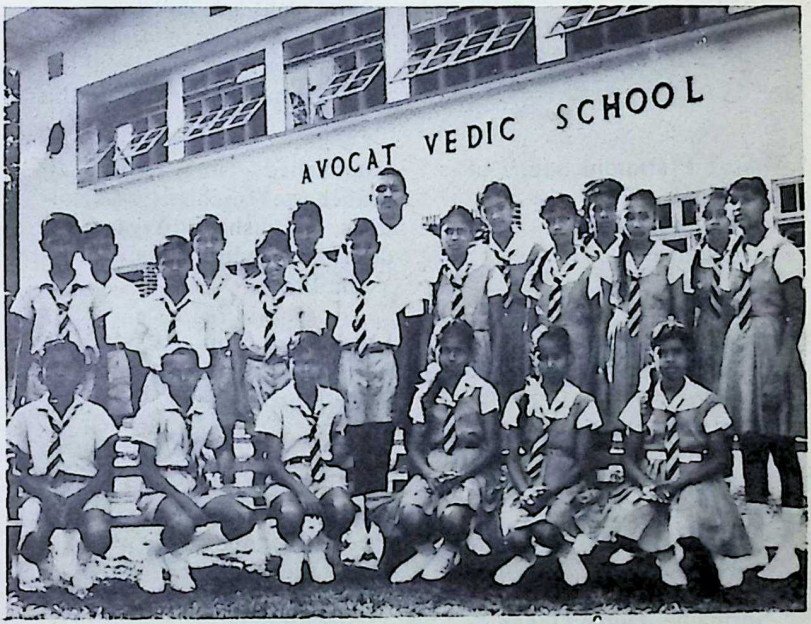
TRINIDAD ARYA SAMAJ — Headquarters

Vedic Temple — Montrose Village

TRINIDAD



Avocat Vedic School

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1969 - The Guyana Pratinidhi Sabha was established and registered by the Government as a national Arya Samaj movement.

1970 - Mahatma Anand Saraswati and Pandit Indrasena Vishwapremie (Sangeetakar) arrived in Guyana.

1971 - Shruti Sheel Sharma, Ph.D., a Vedic missionary attached to the American Aryan League, arrived in Guyana.

1975 - Centenary Celebration of the Arya Samaj (1875-1975).

VEDIC ORGANIZATIONS IN NORTH AMERICA AND SOUTH AMERICA

Name and Address	HISTORICAL DETAILS
1. American Aryan League 76 D'Urban & Vlissengen Road Georgetown, Guyana	Established in 1937 by Prof. Bhaskaranand, M.A.; conducts DAV College (Georgetown) and DAV College (Port Mourant); members - Pratinidhi Sabhas of Guyana, Surinam and Trinidad.
2. Caribbean Vedic Parishad St. Clement Junction Ste. Madeline, P.O., Trinidad.	Established in 1940; membership - seven Pratinidhi Sabhas of Guyana, Trinidad and Surinam; plans annual conference in each territory; formulates programmes and policies of the Arya Samaj movement in the region.
3. Arya Pratinidhi Sabha of Trinidad Montrose Village Chaguanas Trinidad, West Indies.	Established in 1938; 20 branches; 11 schools and colleges; publishes "Arya Sandesh" and Vedic Tracts; owner - Vedic Press.
4. The Arya Dewakar Wanicastraat 210, Parimaribo Suriname, Dutch Guyana.	Established in 1934; 25 branches; 13 schools and colleges; 1 orphanage.
5. Gameete Arya Pratinidhi Sabha P.O. Box 250, Gravenstraat Parimaribo Suriname, Dutch Guyana.	Established in 1931; 15 branches; 3 schools and colleges; 1 orphanage.

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6.	Suriname Pratinidhi Arya Pratinidhi Sabha Welgedacte No. 22 Suriname, Dutch Guyana.	Established in 1948; 2 branches; Vedic Mandir.
7.	Guyana Arya Pratinidhi Sabha P.O. Box 667 W-309 Murray Street Georgetown, Guyana.	Established in 1968; 35 branches; 2 schools and colleges; publishes "Arya Jyot", tracts and booklets.
8.	Vedic Mission of Trinidad 97 B Chacon Street San Fernando Trinidad, W.I.	Established in 1954; 2 branches.
9.	Guyana Arya Vir Dal P.O. Box 667 W-309 Murray Street Georgetown, Guyana.	Established in 1956 by Dr Usharbudh Arya; membership is about five thousand; headquarters - Mahaicony Ashram.
10.	Dr Usharbudh Arya Dhyan Manderam 2104 South 30th Avenue Minneapolis, Minn. 55406 U.S.A.	Established in 1968; ashram - 30 acres; publishes tracts and booklets.
11.	Pt Inder Persaud MHA New York Arya Samaj 604 East Street, 96th Avenue Brooklyn, New York 11236 U.S.A.	Established in 1968.

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CHAPTER XIV

ARYA SAMAJ IN EUROPE AND AMERICA

HINDU CENTRE - LONDON

A large number of Hindus (Aryans) came to live in the United Kingdom and thousands of them made this country their home. It became necessary to provide a Hindu religious and cultural centre.

In 1962 Mr F.C. Sondhi, Dr K.D. Kumria, Mr. S. Ramachand, Mr. L. Zutshi, Dr R.N. Bhaskar, Mr K.K. Singh, Mr P.S. Benarase together with a few other persons formed a society called the **Hindu Centre, London.** It was decided to hire St. Michael's Hall in Golden Green for the weekly meetings. Mr Indar Nath, Mr and Mrs Kohli, Mrs Chowdhury, Mr L.K. Jeswani, Mrs A. Sharma and Mr Bijwe gave their willing support. Mr P.S. Benarase paid the rent for the first six months and the Centre started its activities at the St. Michael's Hall. Pandit Usharbudh's guidance as a scholar and priest was offered most generously. Prof. S.N. Bharadwaj who is the president of the Centre at the moment, began his association with this body in 1963.

In India Prof. S.N. Bharadwaj was associated with Acharya Vishwabandu's famous Research Institute at Hoshiarpur. He was also connected with D.A.V. College of Hoshirpur (Punjab) as Professor of Philosophy. He also worked for the Dayanand Salvation Mission with Mr Dewan Chand. He is well versed in Indian Philosophy, the Vedas and other Indian Scriptures. In Britain Prof. Bharadwaj preached the principles of Hinduism. He had the honour of attending several religious conferences in the country and abroad as a representative of Hinduism. He is completely dedicated to the cause of the Arya Samaj and its principles.

In 1968 the Centre bought its own building and it was fortunate to receive the support of some donors who offered substantial amounts of money. The Sabha obtained a cash donation of five thousand pounds sterling from Mr Chanrai and family for the purpose of purchasing the present building and according to their wish the main hall of the Centre has been named as "Kewalram Hall". A splendid picture of Maharshi Swami Dayanand painted in golden colour, was donated by Mr Rughani and family. It hangs in the main hall of the Centre.

The Centre had the honour of welcoming all great scholars and Swamis who visited the United Kingdom from India and the western countries. There is now a dedicated scholar, Dr Shruti Sheel Sharma, M.A., Ph.D., as the resident priest. He is serving the Hindu Centre

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and the country in this country as a preacher, priest and administrator. Dr Sharma spent a great deal of time in Guyana, Surinam and other West Indian countries as a Vedic missionary.

The Hindu Centre is engaged in propagating the principles of the Vedas as laid down by the great Swami Maharishi Dayanand. The aim of the Centre is to bring about mutual understanding, harmony and unity between Eastern and Western thoughts.

VEDIC MISSION LONDON
(Arya Samaj Hounslow)

At a meeting held on 8th February, 1970, at the residence of Mr K.D. Kapila, it was decided that an Arya Samaj be established in Hounslow. The suggestion of Professor Dilip that the organization be named Vedic Mission London, was accepted. Mr Kapila enlisted the support of Mr J. Byrne of the Hounslow Community Relations Council and a steering committee was formed with Mr Kapila as the president and Mr Prem Dosaj as the Secretary.

Mrs Savitri Chhabra and other women interested in the work of the Arya Samaj participated in the first meeting of the Mission held on 12th April, 1970. About two hundred people attended. Mr Byrne arranged the Alexandra Road School for the congregational meetings of the Mission. Such meetings are held regularly on the last Sunday of each month.

On 31st May, 1975, a special celebration was held to mark the Centenary of the founding of the Arya Samaj. The High Commissioner for India, Mr Apa B. Pant, was the guest of honour. The Mayor and Mayoress of the Borough also attended. About four hundred and ninety Asians of different faiths and from the various communities attended the function. In his address, Mr Kapila stated that Rishi Dayanand had revolutionised the slumbering Indian society of his day. He mentioned how this great reformer brought about a Vedic renaissance and fought relentlessly against the disintegrating and demoralising practices and customs that had crept into Indian society. Prof. Bhardwaj, the president of the Hindu Centre London, also spoke on the occasion. The proceedings were enlivened by the songs of Mrs Sheela Markande and her daughter. Mrs Savitri Chhabra and a group of ladies of the Mission added to the success of the function.

The officials of the Mission are Mr K.D. Kapila (president), Mr F.C. Mair, M.B.E. (vice-president), Mr K.C. Chopra (secretary), Mr Sat Arya (asst. secretary) and Mr Mangat Ram (treasurer). The executive members are Mr Y.V. Puri, Mr H.L. Modgil, Mr D.R. Verma, Mrs D. Marwaha, Mrs S. Malik, Mrs S. Chhabra, Mr D.C. Mayor, Mr K.K. Segal, Mr S.K. Kapila and Mr H. Chaudry.

In order to mark the centenary of the Arya Samaj a donation of three thousand pounds sterling was made by the Bhagwathie family living

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in London for the construction of an Arya mandir. In the wake of the enthusiasm that followed a further amount of two thousand pounds sterling was collected. Arrangements have already been finalised to purchase a plot of land and to complete the building project.

Many years earlier Mr Lalla Tekchand had done creditable work in London in the name of the Arya Samaj. In 1953 Prof. Usharbudh and Mr Dhirendrasheel Shastri arrived in London. As they were also learned in the English language, it became possible for them to preach the Vedic religion to appreciative audiences in England.

An Arya Samaj has been established in Birmingham where congregations are held and religious festivals are celebrated.

The Indian population in London has increased recently. Many Europeans have also become interested in the Hindu religion and philosophy. Some sections of the Hindu community have already established places of worship in London. It has become necessary for the Arya Samaj to take more positive steps to disseminate the teachings of the Vedas in London.

The Mission plans to set up sub-committees to work in the social, cultural and religious fields. It has also recieved the active co-operation of Prof. Dilip and Prof Bhardwaj. Mr P.S. Jariwala helped in the formation of the Mission. The Vedic Mission appeals to all the well-wishers of humanity for assistance, co-operation and understanding in a spirit of tolerance, friendliness and love of mankind.

CENTRES OF HINDU RELIGION IN LONDON

1. Hindi Centre (London)
   39 Grafton Terrace
   London, N.W.5.

2. Vedic Mission (London)
   15 Spring Grove Crescent
   Hounslow, TW3, 4DD
   United Kingdom.

3. Vedic Mission (Arya Samaj)
   387 High Street
   Birmingham, B70, 90W
   United Kingdom

VEDIC RELIGION IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

In 1909 a World Conference of Religion was held in the United States of America. Dr Keshevdev Shastri represented the Arya Samaj at this Conference. He spoke on the teachings of the Vedas. An organization called the Vedic Society was formed in America under the leadership of Mr Marks. (The address is: Vedic Society of America, Dr Peter A. Meci, 1540 West 8th Street, Brooklyn, New York). Some of the Vedic preachers who visited America during their lecture-tours were Pandit Mehta Jaimini (1929), Pandit Ayodhya Prasad, B.A. (1934), Pandit Rishiram (1954), Mr Dhirendrasheel and Mr Dharmajit Jigyasu.

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Dr Usharbudh Arya has already worked in the United States of America for several years as a Vedic missionary. He has founded the Meditation Temple in Minneapolis. The Ayra Samaj was formed in New York in 1968 and the address is 604 East Street, 96th Avenue, Brooklyn, New York. Pandit Indraprasad has been associated with this Samaj. Prof. Bhaskaranand, M.A., established the American Aryan League in 1937 to increase the scope of the Vedic mission and to give a measure of cohesion to the Arya Samaj movement in the United States of America, South America and the Caribbean Islands.

VEDIC RELIGION IN CANADA

Indians went to Canada in the nineteenth century. By 1904 they had settled in large numbers in British Columbia on the west coast of Canada. They were mainly Hindi-speaking and Punjabi Hindus. They have shown a keen interest in the teachings of the Arya Samaj, but the Samaj has not been established there as an organization. Many Vedic preachers visited Canada during their lecture-tours and exerted a good influence among the Hindu settlers. Lectures and discussions on the Vedic religion invariably form part of the religious and cultural activities of the Hindus of Canada.

Pandit Gyanchand Shastri, Dr S.C. Sood, Mr B.R. Sunder and Dr Gurudas Bhandari have held discourses on the Vedic religion among the Hindus in Canada. Pandit Gyanchand is making a determined effort to establish an Arya Pratinidhi Sabha in Canada to mark the centenary of the Arya Samaj.

VEDIC RELIGION IN EUROPE

Vedic missionaries and scholars have carried the message of the Vedas to many parts of Europe where a keen interest has been shown in the Hindu religion and philosophy. At the moment the Vedic religion is being propagated in Switzerland by Mr Manudev Bhattacharya and in Italy by Mr Liviyo A. Jiyolo.

Many Hindi-speaking Indians have emigrated from Surinam (Dutch Guyana) to Holland. As they are proud of their cultural heritage, they have become the pioneers of the Vedic religion and the Hindi language in Holland. One of them is Mrs Mangalvanshi whose contribution to the Vedic religion and the Hindi Language in Holland has been very praiseworthy and admirable. A Dutch youth went to the Gurukul Kangri and spent several years there in the study of Sanskrit, Hindi and the Vedic philosophy. He assumed the name, Upandra. When he returned to Holland he wrote a book in Dutch about the system of education at the Gurukul Kangri and the Vedic religion. This work has now been translated into English and French.

Eminent scholars and students of some of the Universities of Europe and America have become interested in the Arya Samaj and the Vedic religion as a useful field of research for the M.A. and Ph.D. degrees.

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They have established contact with the Sarvadeshik Arya Pratinidhi Sabha and some of them have already arrived in India where they are busily engaged in research work in the archives and libraries. The Sarvadeshik Sabha has granted them the permission to work under the direction of the head of the research department of the Sabha, Acharya Vaidyanath Shastri.

Some of the scholars and students working in India are Dr. F.R. Alchan (Professor of Ancient History and Archaeology, University of Cambridge, England); Prof. J.N.R. Thurmby, London (Topic: Contribution of the Arya Samaj to the Cause of Indian Civilization and Freedom); Dr R.H. Eldon, Ph.D., Mount Allison University, Canada; Mr Himsath, America (Topic: Rationalism and Hindu Social Reform); Miss Suseen, Washington (Topic: The Arya Samaj - First Thirty Years from Inception and Its Effect); Mr Gerald A. Higgar, Full-Bright Junior Research Scholar (Topic: History of Hindi Movement of Arya Samaj).

Several works of Vedic literature have already been translated into foreign languages. One such work is the "Light of Truth" which has been translated into English, French, German, Russian, Chinese and Burmese. The "Light of Truth" is a comprehensive work in which Swami Dayanand Saraswati, the founder of the Arya Samaj, discusses the tenets of the Vedic religion.

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arya -	a noble person
bal -	youth
bhajan -	a song in praise of God
D.A.V. -	Dayanand-Anglo-Vedic
dharma -	religious code of conduct, religion
kirtan -	devotional song
kumar -	youth
-ji (suffix) -	an address showing respect
mandal -	an organization that deals with any matter in a specialized field
maha -	of great propriety or significance
mahila (stri) -	relating to women
mandir -	a place of worship, temple
mantra -	a concise phrase or statement in Sanskrit, particularly of religious significance
pratinidhi -	representative
patshala -	school
sabha -	organization, body
samaj -	society, organization
sammelan -	conference
samiti -	committee
sannyasa -	holy order in which all wordly attachments are voluntarily relinquished
sanskar -	a rite prescribed by Scripture
satsang -	congregation, gathering held for a religious purpose
shri (sri) -	a respectful address (masculine gender)
shrimati -	a respectful address (feminine gender)
shuddhi -	purification, conversion
swami -	an address of great reverence
vanprasthi -	the third stage of life according to Vedic teachings when worldly attachments are reduced in preparation for the final stage of sannyasa
vidhi -	procedure (especially with reference to the scriptures)
vidya -	education, literacy
yajna (havan) -	offering (burning) of grain, purified butter and sandalwood in the sacred fire, accompanied by a recital of Vedic mantras
yuvak -	youth

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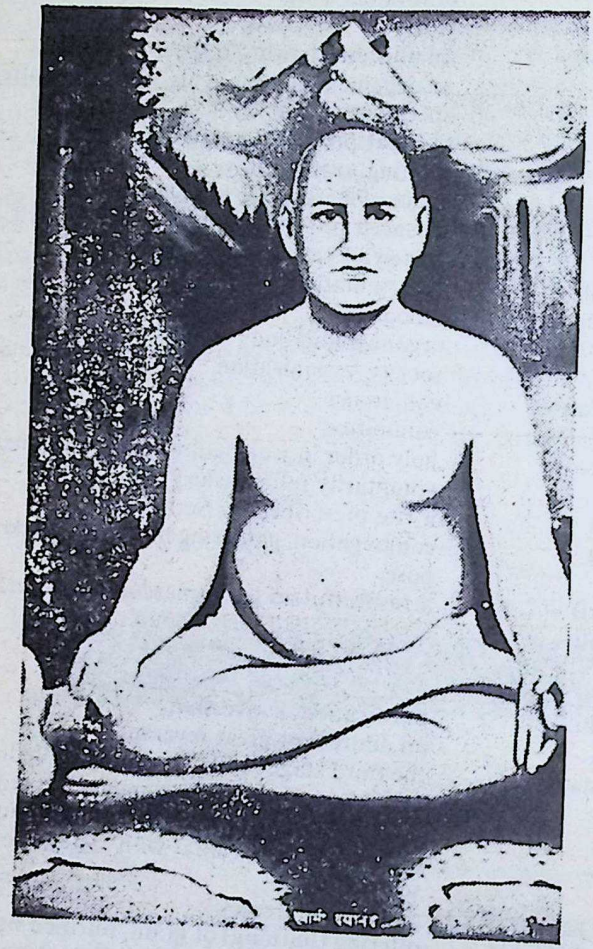

MAHARSHI DAYANAND SARASWATI

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PART III

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

This section contains the reproduction of two publications of the Veda Niketan (Arya Pratinidhi Sabha, South Africa), namely,

"Maker of Modern India: Swami Dayanand",

by Pandit Nardev Vedalankar;

and

"Arya Samaj: Its Ideals and Achievements",

by Pandit Nardev Vedalankar.

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CHAPTER XV

MAKER OF MODERN INDIA

SWAMI DAYANAND

1. THE DISPIRITED YOUNG SANNYASI

A place in the Himalayas; all round lofty peaks laden with snow looking so much like white-haired munis standing erect as they meditated; the deep Alaknanda River bubbling through ravines in the mountains; the Alaknanda, a tributary of the Ganges, flowing swiftly with its load of ice-cold water. On the banks of this Alaknanda stands a young sannyasi who wears a loincloth. He has a strong physique. Every muscle in his body is taut, but his face is sad, and in his eyes lurks despair. "I shall lose my life in the waters of the Alaknanda. My body shall melt away like the snow of the Himalayas and be no more," the sannyasi murmurs. A voice within him hastily retorts; "No! What sort of a young man are you? You lose courage after only a little effort. Try again. What can't be achieved by trying! The lamp within you has not been lit to be snuffed." The words have an effect on the sannyasi. He fills with hope again, and his face becomes bright. His eyes shine with determination.

Who is this young sannyasi whose age could not have been more than 30 years? He is Swami Dayanand Saraswati. While wandering in the forests of the Himalayas, he had come to the banks of the Alaknanda. The sannyasi — why had he been wandering? Since when had he been wandering? A few days? Ten-twelve years? No. Two or three years? Ten years? No. He had been wandering for a full fifteen years. Why? He wanted to learn the secret of the world, what life and death was. This was what he searched. What was the source of the universe? God? Who was God? Where was He? How could He be found? What was the truth? How could one obtain it?

These were the doubts of young Dayanand and to find the answers, he had wandered persistently for fifteen years. And after all his wanderings, he had still not found the answers to his questions.

Then what should the youth do? Commit Suicide? No. Young Dayanand, while standing on the banks of the Alaknanda, again resolved to seek truth and left to fulfil his wish. Who knows how many more years he would have to wander before the goal was reached.

Who is this young Dayanand? Why did he forsake the joys of this world and become a Sannyasi? What incidents disturbed him so much that he left the pleasures of the world to seek truth? Come let us take a glimpse into his past before we move into the future.

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2. SPARK OF TRUTH AND TURN OF EVENTS

Gujerat is a province of Western Bharat. In this province is the little state of Morabee. Morabee has a village which is called Tankara. A Brahmin lived in Tankara and in 1824 A.D. a baby was born in his family. The baby's father was Karsonjee Laljee Travadee. The baby was named Moolshanker. Karsonjee was a taseeldar (collector) of the state. He was a man of comfortable means and the child grew up in a happy, affectionate environment.

Being a Brahmin it was incumbent on Karsonjee to learn sanskrit, the Vedas and other religious books. He was studious by nature and therefore enjoyed his study. When Moolshanker grew up he also began to study sanskrit. He took a great interest in grammar and the way rituals and ceremonies were performed. Moolshanker was undoubtedly a child prodigy, for, when he was still very young, he surprised his elders by memorising the whole of the Yajur Veda. This made his father very proud of him.

If Moolshanker continued his studies he would have become a good karam kandi (a brahmin who performed rituals). But Moolshanker was not destined to become a karam kandi. He was born for greater things and this was revealed by three incidents which happened in his life. The incidents were:

1. Spectacle at Shiv Ratree;
2. Death of his sister and uncle, and
3. Preparation for his marriage.

Karsonjee was a staunch believer in pujas and rituals. Moolshanker did not take long to learn to perform them. He began to fast and take vows, as was customary among brahmins. When Moolshanker was thirteen years old, his father requested him to keep the vow of Shiv Ratree. He was told that if he observed it he would be blessed with a glimpse of God at midnight. This was what Moolshanker wished dearly and he observed the vow with zeal.

In the temple of Shiva, Moolshanker sits and takes part in the rituals. He sings bhajans and kirtans with other devotees. His mind is deep in meditation. While he meditates there is faith in him that it is the night of supreme revelation. Time passes. Devotees begin to doze. Even the temple priest dozes. One by one they fall into deep sleep. Moolshanker remains awake waiting for the great moment. It comes but God does not appear before him. Instead he sees some mice sporting in the prasad which has been offered to Shiva.

At that moment Moolshanker's faith suffers a great blow. A doubt appears in his mind. He begins to think. Where is God? He resolves that he would seek the Mool (source) of Shanker (God) and with this resolution firmly in his mind, he leaves the temple and returns home. This incident, on the occasion of Shiva Ratree, brought a question to the mind of Moolshanker. Question is the

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thing which prompts the seeker to search for truth; makes him wish to acquire knowledge and is the source of the progress of humanity. Question is the thing which made Moolshanker restless for the next fifteen years.

Within the next three years of the incident in the temple, Moolshanker suffered from another blow. The incident in the temple filled him with a doubt, but the next gave him the spur to have his doubt dispelled. Moolshanker had a younger sister. He was attached to her. Suddenly the girl became ill. Her case was so bad that the doctor who attended her could not help. In a matter of hours the girl died.

The death of his sister placed another question before him. What was this thing called death? Was it inevitable? If that was so then what was this thing called life? And why were these in this world?

While he wrestled with these problems, another blow struck him. His uncle died. Moolshanker loved his uncle even more than his father. He lost interest in everyday life. His mind filled with only one desire and that was to seek the ultimate truth of things.

The questions that came to Moolshanker come to almost every person. In the ordinary man they appear and disappear unanswered. Moolshanker was no ordinary man.

Moolshanker would now sit and brood for the whole day. His parents saw the transformation and realised in which direction his mind was moving. They decided to get him married. Marriage would prevent his thoughts from leading him to ascetism. The anxious parents began to make arrangements for their son's wedding.

3. IN SEARCH OF KNOWLEDGE

Moolshanker knew how much the fetters of a householder would keep him from his desires. Therefore he ran away from home before his marriage.

Two thousand five hundred years earlier another youth also ran away from home. His father had discovered his yearning for spiritual enlightenment and tried to stop his quest by getting him married. The youth married but, on the day his baby was born, left home. That youth was Siddartha, the same Siddartha who later appeared before the world as Lord Buddha. Today approximately 50% of the people of Asia are his followers.

Unlike Siddartha, Moolshanker left home before marriage. He was not prepared to be snared in its mesh. But Moolshanker was young and inexperienced and his father had a long arm in his state. The youth was soon caught at a festival in Siddhpur and brought home. Instead of yielding to his father's will Moolshanker became more determined and ran away again. This youth, this same Moolshanker, later appeared before the world as Maharshi Swami Dayanand Saraswati.

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When Moolshanker was 20-21 years old he left to seek the Mool (Source) of Shanker (God); to solve the problem of life and death; to learn the secret of the world. With this aim in mind he wandered in the jungles and followed saints and sadhus. To break away completely from worldly life Moolshanker accepted the order of a swami from Sannyasi Purnanand. Now he was no longer known as Moolshanker but Swami Dayanand.

As Swami Dayanand also had the desire to seek truth, he did not wane and his wandering nature remained. Swami Dayanand learnt yoga form yogis. He discussed religion with Vedantists. They told him that the world was an illusion. This philosophy did not satisfy him and he searched on.

Wherever Dayanand felt that he could get knowledge he went hurrying. In the forest; on the banks of rivers and lakes; in caves and on peaks of mountains the young sannyasi roamed. Thirsty, hungry, with hardly a decent place to sleep; fearing neither the tiger nor the bear of the forest; nor the gales and hurricanes of the plains; nor heat and cold; nor sleet and rain, the young sannyasi wandered on. People tried to dissuade him by telling him of the dangers which lay ahead. They showed him the sweet side of life and tempted him to stay. Sadhus of the Aghori cult tried to murder him. The Mahant of Okhie Monastery in the Himalayas was prepared to make him his disciple and offered him the leadership of his cult if he would remain with him. But how could a man whose fervour knew no bounds yield to all these? Dayanand went on wandering. From shrine to shrine; from one sacred place to another; from the confluence of the Yamuna and the Ganges to the temples of Narbada and Saraswati he went. At last he came to the banks of Alaknanda River. He was a sannyasi full of despair and ready to commit suicide. Then the voice within him spoke and he was filled with the feeling that the goal was not far away.

4. AT THE FEET OF THE GURU

There is a grass hut in the town of Mathura. Early one morning a young sannyasi knocks on its door. The door opens. An old sannyasi stands in the doorway. The sannyasi is so thin that the bones of his ribs show. His forehead is broad and bright. The young sannyasi who knocks on the door touches his feet.

The old sannyasi was Swami Virjanand. The young man who touched his feet was Swami Dayanand. This was their first meeting. The seeker, after his long and tedious quest, had found his master. The youth who had set out to search truth when he was 21 years old reached his goal 15 years later. What unyielding courage was his? How unquenchable his thirst for knowledge!

During the past fifteen years Dayanand had seen many gurus; had come in contact with many sadhus and sannyasis and appraised many yogis, ascetics, scholars and stoics. In none did he find peace and satisfaction as he did in this 80 year old man.

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Swami Virjanand was blind. His physical eyes were closed but his inner eyes and eyes of knowledge were open. This blind master set about giving his disciple the light which was to shine over the whole world of Bharat for the next twenty years.

Virjanand revealed the secret of his knowledge to Dayanand. He asked him to throw away all worldly books and study those that were written by the sinless, selfless, desireless, detached and prideless rishis of old.

While Dayanand studied he lived an austere and devoted life. He experienced much hardship. Being a sannyasi he did not have the means to provide for himself. What was he to do? Fortunately there were people willing to help. Durga Khatree gave him roasted gram which was his daily breakfast. Amarlal Joshi paid for groceries. Lala Goburdhan provided oil and a sweet seller, milk. Clothing was no problem. Dayanand had a strong, healthy body and the meagre clothes of a sannyasi were enough for him.

While Dayanand studied he served his guru. Every morning at 4 o' clock he awoke and drew water from the Yamuna river. He followed this by sweeping the hut and the yard and doing other chores.

For about three years Dayanand studied the scriptures, sanskrit, grammar, and other subjects at the feet of his guru. Knowledge he already had but a proper understanding, a proper interpretation he lacked. This his guru gave him. Dayanand's outlook changed. His doubts vanished. He now knew the secret of life. The Moolshanker of Tankara had found the Moolshanker of the universe.

When his studies were complete Dayanand wished to leave. It was customary to give gifts to the teacher at the time of departure. The only thing that Dayanand could afford was a bowl of cloves. Virjanand loved cloves and Dayanand could not have found a better gift.

The bowl of cloves pleased the old master but he said, "Dayanand, I am not satisfied with the gift. I desire something bigger, something which only you could give. Son, with the knowledge you have at your disposal, go and dispel the darkness of ignorance which envelopes our country. Preach the truth of the shastras and the Vedic religion. Serve your country in this way. If you do this you will give me the gift I ask."

Humbly Dayanand accepted his guru's words, and, till the end of his life — for the next twenty years — tried to do what was demanded of him. The master had opened the pupil's eyes. Now it was the pupil's turn to open the eyes of Bharat. Dayanand came out of the hut. His face shone with the fire of his responsibilities, and in his heart glowed the peace one gets when one is profoundly satisfied.

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5. RESOLUTION ON THE BANKS OF THE GANGES BANNER OF CENSURE

The young graduate who left the hut of Virjanand was not without experience. He had learnt much during the fifteen years when he had sieved the dust and dirt of Bharat. He had found the disease with which the mother country suffered. To cure it was his next task. Bharat was a land of superstition and blind faith. There was social and political degradation all round. The people were slaves of meaningless customs and observances. The desire to enquire and discover no longer existed in their minds. There was no longer the urge to endeavour for race, religion and realm. The Bharat of the 18th Century was ignorant, lazy and idle. It was at this time that Dayanand entered the arena.

In 1867 a Kumb Mela was to take place in Hardwar. Hardwar is on the banks of the Ganges. It is the gateway to the Himalayas. At this place the Ganges River leaves the mountain and enters Bharat to distribute her priceless wealth to the plains. At this place also the saints who discover the mines of truth in the Himalayas enter Bharat to distribute their precious finds to the people.

Swami Dayanand arrived at Hardwar on the occasion of the Mela. He was no stranger to Hardwar as he had been in those parts before when he searched for knowledge. Thousands of people had gathered at the place. Sadhus and sannyasis, saints and mahatmas, monks and mendicants, priests and pilgrims all were there.

As soon as Swamiji arrived in Hardwar he began his campaign in earnest. He condemned hypocrisy and preached the religion of the Vedas. After Gautama Buddha and Shankaracharya, Dayanand was, perhaps, the only one to throw a challenge to orthodoxy.

To turn the flow of thoughts which had come down for thousands of years, he had to cleanse the beliefs of the people as one would a dirty utensil. He began to do this by a fiery condemnation of prevalent customs, practices and ostentations. Those who belonged to cults with dubious philosophies were also criticised. Swamijee conducted the campaign in an able manner. He was outspoken and never afraid.

After Hardwar, Swamijee went to many places in Northern India. Wherever he preached his stand was the same. He never spared those who had corrupted the Vedic religion.

Swami Dayanand was an exceptionally good speaker. Nobody could stand against his excellent arguments. His speeches were never boring because he spiced them with humour and jokes. It was not long before Swamijee made contact with the people and thousands came to hear him. He began getting invitations to lecture at meetings and soon wherever he went his fame preceded him. After lectures hundreds of people gathered at his retiring places. By conversing with him they were able to have their doubts dispelled.

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6. IN THE STRONGHOLD OF SANSKRIT, BENARES (KASHI)

Swamijee's propaganda created alarm among the religious leaders of the time. They asked what kind of religion was this that believed in only one god and not the many gods and goddesses they knew? What kind of religion was this that recognised only the authority of the Vedas and no other religious book? What kind of religion was this that condemned idol worship? It stated that there was no place for idol worship in the Vedas; nor for avatars and ancestral worship; nor for discrimination by caste, colour or creed. It did not believe in the sanctifying influence of the waters of the Ganges, nor the religious significance of the eclipse of the sun and the moon.

Wherever Dayanand went he threw a challenge. "Come sit with me," he said. "Let me open the pages of the shastras. Let us test the authority of my beliefs. Let us understand and recognize our religion." Pandits took up the challenge, but in the debates that followed they invariably suffered defeat. In this way Swamijee campaigned in towns, villages, sanskrit colleges and universities, temples, monasteries, pilgrimages and religious abodes of northern India.

The priests and scholars who were humiliated in arguments started an exodus to Kashi. It was their belief that if the sannyasi was to be defeated it would be in Kashi. Someday he would arrive in the holy city and they would see him bow to the learnings of the scholars of the place.

In 1869 Swami Dayanand arrived in Kashi. His coming created a stir among the scholars. The general public, pupils and gurus, devotees and priests and all were filled with excitement. They knew that the anticipated debate would be held soon. It took place under the chairmanship of the King of Kashi, Maharajah Ishwar Narayan Singh. Swami Dayanand was on one side with the Vedas. On the other were Swami Vishudananda, Pandit Tara Charran, Pt. Bal Shastri, Pandit Vamanacharya and others. They were a formidable opposition but Swamijee defeated them one by one. The debate went on for four hours until it was evening. Then the vanquished sought the aid of the failing light. They got their followers to create a commotion. The chief of police of the town was present. He sensed that Swamijee's life was in danger and escorted him safely to his place of residence.

Dayanand returned to Kashi seven times but, after the first defeat, nobody had the courage to face him again.

7. PROPAGANDA AND OPPOSITION

After his encounter with the pandits of Kashi, Dayanand wandered all over Bharat and preached wherever he went. North, East, West and Central India all areas became his fields of labour. His propaganda began to take effect. It caused an awakening in the people and roused a feeling of self respect in the individual.

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Before Swami Dayanand's time the Christian mission had obtained a foothold in Bharat. Moslems were also endeavouring to make converts at about the same time. Thousands left Hinduism and joined the new faiths. Those who converted left not because their religion was bad but because of a lack of knowledge of it. The convertors took advantage of their ignorance and indifference and exploited prevalent vices like the caste system and blind orthodoxy.

Then Swami Dayanand entered the field. He placed before the people a true picture of their religion. The people listened to him and the onslaught of Islam and Christianity waned. As a counter propaganda Swamijee exposed the weaknesses in the philosophy and of the proselytising groups. This made the people look at their own religion with pride.

But saving his people from conversion was not Swamijee's aim. To reform their beliefs, show them the true path was what he had set out to do. In this task he suffered much opposition from his own kind. Swami Dayanand often said "I am a disciple of truth. I shall always speak the truth. If in doing that I hurt anybody the fault is not mine. I shall never leave truth." He lived up to his words fearlessly.

Because of his preachings many people became Dayanand's followers. Many of them decided to be his disciples. Not only did he have wellwishers among Hindus but among Moslems and Christians also. Among them Reverend Scott and Sayed Ahmed Khan are worthy of mention. But there were many who thought of him as their enemy. They were the ones who used religion for their selfish ends. They threatened him; poisoned his food and milk and often met him with an onslaught of bricks and stones. Swamijee bore their attacks calmly and forgave those who would harm him.

Swamijee was a fearless man and intimidations never worried him. His friends always offered to protect his person but Swamijee never took advantage of their kindness. He was a life long celibate (brahmacharaya). Through physical culture and yoga he had acquired a strong body. No one who wanted to do him bodily harm dared to come close. A challenge in his powerful voice was enough to frighten the bravest of his assailants.

Once Swamijee lectured in Anupshahar. A man gave him a folded paan to eat. The moment Swamijee put it into his mouth he realised that there was poison in it. Swamijee's Moslem friend, Sayed Ahmed, a police officer, caught the would-be-assassin and wanted to send him to prison. But Swamijee said "Leave him. I have come to free humanity, not to put them into prison." Swamijee's words left Sayed Ahmed speechless with admiration.

On another occasion, while Swamijee walked along the banks of the Ganges, two powerful looking men attacked him. They wanted to throw him into the river. Swamijee sensed their inten-

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tion. Before they could achieve their purpose he caught them in a grip from which they could not free themselves. With both assailants still in his grasp he jumped into the river. He dived a few times in the water and when the two were gasping for breath and terribly frightened brought them to the bank. Swamijee released them and they slunk away like dogs with tails between their legs.

Swamijee was delivering a speech in Amritsar when a group of children began to throw stones at him. The people caught them and inquired why they had behaved in that fashion. The children said that they were sent by Swamijee's enemies who had promised to give them sweets. Instead of punishing the children Swamijee bought sweets for them and let them go.

Swamijee was a quick-witted person and often used humour and biting remarks to quieten the opposition. Once a shastri came to discourse with him. He said "I am more learned than Dayanand. Therefore I should be given a higher seat." Dayanand said, "Give him a higher seat. If a person is judged by the seat he takes then look up. A crow sits on the branch of that tree. Perhaps he is more learned than you." Humbled in this way the shastri left without discoursing with Swamijee.

When a pandit came to discuss religion with Swamijee he brought a knife with him. He said that whoever lost would have his nose cut off. Swamijee laughingly said, "Why blame the innocent nose. If any part of our body had to be cut it should be the tongue because it is the tongue which will be at fault."

Karansingh was the chief of the state of Karanwas. He had a red dot on his forehead and always carried a sword. Karansingh believed in the sanctifying effect of the water of the Ganges. When Karansingh met Swamijee he asked him whether he believed in the miraculous power of the river. Swamijee said, "I accept the Ganges as it is. For me the vessel in which I carry my water is my Ganges."

"Then does not a person who bathes in the Ganges have his sins washed away?" the chief asked angrily.

"Brother," Swamijee said, "One does not get rid of his sins by bathing in a river or by having faith in some mahatma. Our sins and virtues are obtained by our deeds."

Swamijee's reply made Karansingh angry. He took out his sword and wanted to run it through him. Swamijee held the assailant's hand, snatched the sword and broke it into two. Dayanand's action made Karansingh so ashamed of himself that he left the place without a word.

On another occasion Swamijee was about to depart from a place called Moonger. As the train was late he strolled on the platform. A white engineer and his wife sat on a seat on the platform. The white engineer became very angry when Swamijee came and stood close to him. Swamijee wore only a loin cloth and his appearance offended the white man. The engineer called the

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station master and asked him to get rid of the man in the loin cloth. The stationmaster tactfully told Swamijee that as there was still time for the train to arrive he should rest in the waiting room. Swamijee sensed the reason for the stationmaster's request. He replied, "Tell the white man that I am from the age of Adam and Eve." Having said this he remained at his place. His defiant attitude made the engineer angrier. He demanded that the man in the loin cloth be moved. The stationmaster told him that Swamijee was no ordinary sadhu. He was the great Swami Dayanand Saraswathi. When the engineer heard this his mood changed. He went to Swamijee and apologised. "For a long time it has been my wish to meet you. Now my wish has been fulfilled," he said.

There are many incidents like the above in Swamijee's life. They illustrate his fearless nature, his quick wittedness and his faith in God.

8. FORMATION OF THE ARYA SAMAJ

Swamijee's teachings changed the outlook of the people. Their enthusiasm for their religion grew. Wherever he went he met the important people of the place. Vedantists, Molvis, Christian priests, all were eager to spend some time with him.He even met the great leaders of the time. With them Dayanand discussed not only religion but also the sorry plight of the country, the need for a common language, social reforms and how the people could be better organised. For all these subjects Swamijee had a passionate interest.

Among the great people he met the names of the following are worthy of mention: Keshav Chandra Son, Ramkrishna Paramahansa, Kanhayelall Alakdhari, Harischandra Chintamonie, Sir Sayed Ahmed Khan, Mahadev Govind Rande, Reverend Scott, Colonel Henry Olcott and Madam Blavatsky.

As Swamijee's teachings became more and more effective and his followers grew, he began to think of forming a permanent institution which could carry on his work. On 10th April, 1875, a meeting of Swamijee's followers took place in Bombay where the first Arya Samaj was formed.

According to the Sixth Principle of the Arya Samaj service to humanity is a function of the society. In other words the physical, spiritual and social welfare of the people is a concern of the Samaj. The Arya Samaj believes in an omniscient, omnipresent, omnipotent, formless, immutable eternal, ageless, and immortal God who created the universe. God revealed the knowledge of the Vedas to the ancient rishis. The Vedas are the most sacred and the most authoritative books. The Arya Samaj is ever prepared to accept truth and condemn untruth. With such great ideals the first Arya Samaj was formed.

After the creation of the first Samaj others began to be formed wherever Swamijee went. The society gained strength in the Punjab. In the large as well as the small towns and villages of Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, and Rajastan it also got a strong foothold.

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When there were enough Samajes all over the country they were brought under central institutions in the different provinces.

The movement of the Arya Samaj spread to countries outside India. In time it became a world movement. When the need arose a central international institution was created. Its headquarters is in Delhi and it is called the International Aryan League.

9. THE INFLUENCE OF SWAMI DAYANAND AND THE ARYA SAMAJ

The Arya Samaj is essentially a religious body but its aims cover other aspects of life also; for this reason it has done much work in the fields of social reform, education and helped to awaken political and patriotic conscience of the country.

Because of the work of the Arya Samaj thousands of people gave up the worshipping of devas and devatas and rejected polytheism. They transferred their prayers to the one and only God. Belief in idol-worship declined. Faith in avatars, ancestral worship, sanctifying effects of the Ganges River, superstitious beliefs centring around the eclipse of the moon and sun and the effect of the wrath of Gods and Goddesses were thrown overboard. The conviction that one became sinful when one travelled to foreign countries was laughed at. Religion broke its bonds of narrow mindedness and became universal.

In the field of religion Swami Dayanand's greatest gift was his exposition of the Vedas. All sects of Hinduism have faith in Vedas. They accept them as their authoritative and sacred books but a foolish reverence prevented them from finding out what they contained. Not only did the scholars and religious pandits not read the Vedas but they did not know where the original scripts could be found. Swami Dayanand discovered them and revealed them to the people. Swamijee did not start a new religion. He endeavoured only to show the world what the Vedas contained. He showed the difference between Vedic Sanskrit and popular Sanskrit and presented the essence of the sacred books to the people. In the past thousand years there has never been a man who knew the Vedas as well as Swami Dayanand.

Time, place and age had added much to our philosophy and befuddled its meaning. Swami Dayanand got rid of all foreign influences and placed it before us in its original form. Evidence of his great work can be seen in literature which he left behind. Among them the following are popular;

1. A Commentary on the Vedas.
2. The light of Truth — a commentary and review of the Hindu religion.
3. Introduction to the commentary of the Vedas.
4. Book of Sacraments.

Swamijee created an upheaval in Hindu society just as he had done in religion. He set about organising the people. In these times Hindus have the strength of their self-respect. They are proud of what they are and have faith in themselves. Nobody has done more to create this feeling than Swami Dayanand. Swami-

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jee was the first leader to raise his voice against the curse of untouchability. He was the first person to raise his voice for the social emancipation of women. He condemned child marriage and the marriage of very old men to young girls. He started a movement to allow child-widows to remarry. To rehabilitate untouchables he opened ashrams and embraced the oppressed as if they were his brothers.

In the field of education Swami Dayanand and the Arya Samaj did much. At one time it was looked upon as irreligious to educate women and the oppressed classes. Swamijee changed this outlook. His movement established Anglo Vedic schools, colleges, gurukuls, women tuition classes and sanskrit educational institutions all over the country. Attention was given not only to sanskrit and religion but also to subjects like science, mathematics, politics and economics. Bright students like Shyamjee Krishnavarma were sent to Germany to further their studies. Nobody had thought of doing these things before Swamijee's time.

Swami Dayanand and the Arya Samaj were foremost in creating a feeling of patriotism in the people and making them politically conscious. The Indian National Congress was established in 1883. When Lokmanya Tilak came into the political field in 1907 he brought the word 'Swaraj' with him. But as far back as 1875 Swami Dayanand had mentioned the subject in his book 'Satyarth Prakash' and had said that no matter how well a foreign government ruled over one it was better to have one's own government.

Swami Dayanand was the first man to arouse the spirit of nationalism in the people. He said that the people would be united if they had one national language. Although he was a Gujerati he said that Hindi should be the national language of Bharat. The Arya Samaj took on the onus of promoting Hindi education in the country. Forty years after, Mahatma Gandhi supported the campaign. Mahatma Gandhi showed interest also in another task in which Swami Dayanand and the Arya Samaj had endeavoured persistently. That task was to uplift the oppressed classes. In brief Swami Dayanand and the Arya Samaj cleared the jungle, tilled the soil and sowed the seed. Gandhi and the Indian National Congress reaped the harvest.

The revolutionary movement to free India started in 1905. In 1920 Mahatma Gandhi began his Satyagraha and non-co-operation movement. Swami Dayanand had started the campaign to get Swaraj for India in 1881. His movement was of a different nature from that of Mahatma Gandhi and the Indian National Congress.

After the first Indian war of freedom in 1857 the British rulers became more oppressive. Both the people and the Indian princes were made to suffer. Seeing that the people were devoted to the princes the Swamijee felt that it would pay dividends to get them organized. He tried to arouse a sense of duty in them and was often found in the courts of the princes of western and central India. Many of the princes began to accept Swamijee as their guru.

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He encouraged them to learn western sciences, politics and military arts. It was not long before secret agents discovered that the purpose behind his campaign was to prepare the princes for insurrection and for this he was made to pay with his life.

In this way Swami Dayanand and the Arya Samaj did much for Bharat in the field of religion, culture, politics and education. They were successful to a remarkable degree in their efforts. Not only in Hindu society but in other societies also their influence was felt directly and indirectly. Therefore it is true to say that they were successful in turning the flow of Indian thought.

10. SUPREME SACRIFICE FOR RELIGION AND COUNTRY

"If this body is not destroyed by any lethal means it shall fulfil its course of 100 years as laid down in the Vedas." These were the words of Swami Dayanand who had been a brahma-chari since childhood. He had reached his 60th year but there was no wrinkle of age on his face. His body was as lustrious as a polished piece of copper and his senses were as keen as those of a youth. Yogic culture had made him physically, mentally and spiritually perfect. Death was under his control, it seemed.

In 1883 Swami Dayanand was preaching in Rajputana and Central India when he arrived at Jodhpur. Colonel Sir Pratap Singh, Prince Tej Singh and members of his family who lived in Jodhpur were disciples of Swamijee. The king of Jodhpur. Yashwant Singh,had a high regard for Swamijee and everyday, Swamijee delivered lectures of approximately two hours on political science in his palace. One day, when Swamijee went to the palace, he saw a lewd woman whose name was Nanee Jan. Swamijee was a fearless outspoken person and rebuked the king for his association with the woman. The king hung his head with shame. Swamijee's words hurt Nanee Jan and she vowed to take revenge for the insults which had been heaped on her.

Swamijee's cook was a man named Jaggernath. By using bribes Nanee Jan got him under her will. One evening Swamijee lay on his bed drinking a glass of milk. The milk had been poisoned.Suddenly Swamijee felt excruciating pains in his stomach. He began to vomit. He tried yogic exercises to rid himself of the pain but without success.

Rishi Dayanand asked to see his cook. Jaggernath began to cry when he saw Swamijee on the sick bed. He disclosed his part in the murderous deed. Swami Dayanand forgave Juggernath. Not only that, he gave him money and told him to flee towards Nepal where he would be safe. We have seen in these pages that Swamijee had forgiven other would-be-assassins also. He was a true sannyasi who had no hatred for those who bore him ill will.

Swamijee was attended by a doctor but his treatment had no effect on him. His health worsened. When Swamijee's disciples heard of his plight they came hurrying to Jodhpur. Swamijee was taken to Mount Abu. He was treated there by Dr Lakshmandass. The treatment helped but Dr Lakshmandass, for some unknown

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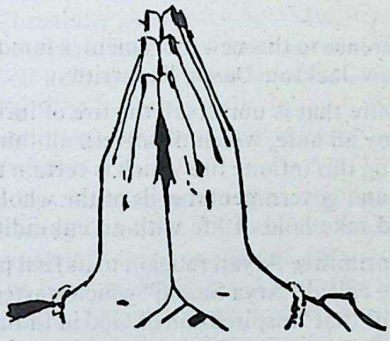
reason, was transferred to Ajmer. The Rishi was also taken to Ajmer but the journey to the city worsened his condition. Swamijee's body became covered with pimples and blisters. He found difficulty in speaking and was so weak that moving his limbs was a problem.

On Diwali night, 30th October, 1883, Swamijee's disciples stood around his bed. Swamijee asked for all doors to be opened. He sat up and chanted Vedic mantras. After reciting the Gayatri he opened his eyes. His face bore a pleased expression. The great man said: 'O God, who is compassionate, if this is Your will let it be. My life has been a wonderful play.'' Having said this Swamijee lay on the bed. His features were calm. A little while passed. Then Swamijee held his breath. When he let it go his soul went with it.

That Diwali night the light of Dayanand's soul fused with the great light of God. That night thousands of little lights were lit in every home but Mother Bharat's brightest lamp was no more. Nay, from that lamp countless other lamps found their light and in that it found peace.

Maharshi Dayanand was the maker of Modern India. He was the messenger of the new awakening in his mother country. Dayanand had to prepare the path of progress for Bharat.

May the banner of Truth and Vedas ever fly aloft.



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CHAPTER XVI

ARYA SAMAJ - ITS IDEALS AND ACHIEVEMENTS

PART I

A NEW WORLD RELIGIOUS MOVEMENT

On the 10th April, 1875, a few public-spirited persons imbued with religious fervour met in Bombay, India, under the guidance of a dynamic and illustrious sannyasi. On this day they gave birth to a new movement with the prime object of doing good and to bring about the physical, spiritual and social improvement of all men. This movement focussed a new light and, like a flame, began to burn to ashes the ignorance, blind faith and superstitious customs that had polluted the very vitals of Hindu society. It began to lay anew the true foundations of religion and divine knowledge. This spark brought about revolutionary changes in the religious, social and educational spheres. It reawakened people from mental lethargy and removed ignorance from the rust-laden intellect of men who had slavishly accepted the evil traditions and customs for many centuries. This movement not only brought about enlightenment in India alone but also in places beyond the shores of India. It created a religious reawakening among the people. The movement was called THE ARYA SAMAJ, and its founder was the illustrious sannyasi Swami Dayanand Saraswati.

Making reference to this new movement, a famous American philosopher, Andrew Jackson Davis, has written:

"I behold a fire that is universal, the fire of infinite love which burneth to destroy all hate, which dissolveth all things to their purification. Beholding this infinite fire which is certain to melt the kingdoms and empires and governmental evils of the whole earth, I rejoice exceedingly and take hold of life with an enkindling enthusiasm.

"To restore primitive Aryan religion to its first pure state was the fire in the furnace called "Arya Samaj" which started and burnt brightly in the bosom of that "inspired son of God in India" — Dayanand Saraswati."

Thirty-two years before the establishment of this society Moolshanker, a lad of 21, left his home having renounced worldly pleasures and material possessions. This youth wandered about the hills and valleys of India for fifteen years in quest of truth. At last in a lowly hut in Mathura, he met an aging sannyasi, Swami Virjanand. Having sat at the feet of this sannyasi for two-and-a-half years, and having ob-

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tained the true knowledge for which he had left his home, Moolshanker ventured out into the world. This youth, Moolshanker, later became known to the world as Swami Dayanand.

After preaching the doctrines of the Vedas at various places for a period of twelve years, Swami Dayanand decided to found the Arya Samaj to give permanence to his work. The founder of the Arya Samaj was a Rishi who possessed foresight. The principles that this sage expounded are universal. Through the principles that Swami Dayanand enunciated, he hoped to bring about individual, social, national and universal change. The principles and the views he expressed were not for the benefit of any one country or race but for the good of all mankind. The principles are conducive to our well-being in every sphere of our life. The Arya Samaj is a religious movement not merely in the sense that it is concerned with worship, prayer and philosophy, but its teachings embrace every aspect of one's life. Its activity permeates the political, economic, commercial, educational and universal movement. The Arya Samaj of Swami Dayanand sets about in its work with noble and lofty aims. It has within itself the strength and vigour to become a worldwide movement. It is desirous of bringing within its fold humanity at large.

The Arya Samaj saw its beginning in India. It has many followers in India, yet the Samaj has not confined its activities to India alone. Similarly, the followers of the principles of Arya Samaj are mostly Hindus, but these are principles that are for the good of all mankind. The work and mission of Swami Dayanand was directed towards the well-being of all who are inhabiting this world. To him the people of this world and the followers of different religions were the same. His well-wishers were to be found not only among the Hindus, but also among the Muslims and Christians. A well-known Muslim reformer from Aligarh, Sir Sayed Ahmed, and Reverend Scot, a Christian, were among his friends and admirers. The leader of the Brahmo Samaj in Calcutta, Shri Keshavshandra Sen, was an intimate friend of Swami Dayanand. The founders of the Theosophical Society, regarded him as their spiritual preceptor.

Swami Dayanand was an advocate of Truth. He was of the view: "We should be ever ready to accept truth and to renounce untruth." This is the fourth principle of the Arya Samaj. Incidentally, he called his famous book "The Light of Truth". In advocating truth, wherever Swami Dayanand came across unrighteousness, faleshood, blind faith, doubts, ignorance and irreligious practices, he opposed and condemned them most vigorously and openly. Towards every-one, even those who disagreed with him, he maintained a friendly approach, but he could not for a moment tolerate untruth, falsehood and hypocrisy. In this world it has become cutomary to oppose such forthright speakers and religious reformers. Swami Dayanand was no exception. Such visionaries are always ahead of their times and they have always

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striven to make the lot of their fellowmen a better one. Society in the earlier stages becomes their implacable enemy. But ultimately people come to realise their folly and begin to accept the teachings of these reformers and use their ideas and thoughts for social and religious advancement. Such has been the case with Swami Dayanand. He fought against overwhelming odds and his glorious life was brought to an end by his adversaries who poisoned him. To propagate the cause of Truth he never swerved from his noble path. He sacrificed his precious life for the welfare of mankind.

Arya Samaj is a society of noble men and women. It is important for us to know what the meaning of the word "arya" is and also in what sense it has been used. The word **arya** has its origin in the Sanskrit language. It means a pure, noble, righteous and progressive person. The word **arya** is not indicative of any particular sect or race. Within this context then there are two types of individuals in this world, i.e. noble and ignoble. (Rigveda 1/51/8: Vijanihya Aryanye Chadasyavao): All individuals who make up the society should aim to be noble. The word arya does not denote any particular sect nor does it refer particularly to people residing in a particular country. Therefore it follows that any honest and decent person who either lives in India or England or Africa or the Middle East or in any part of the world could be an arya. Thus Arya Samaj is a society of pure, noble and righteous persons.

THE MESSAGE OF ARYA SAMAJ

What message the Arya Samaj purports to put across and why it is a universal movement will now be dealt with under the following six headings:-

1. Philosophical and Spiritual Principles
2. Outlook towards the World
3. Ethically Disciplined Life
4. Development of Individuality
5. Development of Social Consciousness
6. World Unity and Universal Brotherhood.

1. PHILOSOPHICAL AND SPIRITUAL PRINCIPLES

(a) **Concept of God and Trinity:** The Arya Samaj believes in the existence of God. It believes that God is the controlling power of this universe. God is **one.** Because He has many attributes and performs various tasks He has been called by many names. This is borne out by the following verse in the Rigveda, 1-64-46: **Ekam sad vipra bahudha vadanti. Ekam** meaning **one.** The Arya Samaj does not believe in the existence of different gods and goddesses possessing powers of their own. God is **All Knowledgeable, Almighty** and **All-pervading.** He has no beginning and has no end. He is Unborn and Immortal. He is the Creator, Sustainer and Destroyer of this universe. He is Unchange-

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able and Formless. Therefore, being without any form or shape, it is not possible to create an image of Him. He is All-Existence-Knowledge-Bliss. The Arya Samaj believes in the worship of one God only.

God evolves this universe out of matter. The soul of an individual derives pleasure from this universe. Matter and soul are both beginningless and eternal. The Arya Samaj does not agree with the view that this universe has been evolved out of God or that this universe is nothing but the form of Brahma. Neither does it believe that this world has been created out of nothing. Similarly, it does not believe that God takes a human form depending upon His power of "maya" or illusion. It does not accept the view that the soul is part of God.

An all-knowledgeable and absolute God cannot be enveloped in ignorance or delusion. The soul is a separate entity. It enjoys the fruits of its good deeds and suffers as a result of evil deeds. In this way, the Arya Samaj believes in the trinity of God, Soul and Matter. Each of them is endowed with its own characteristics.

(b) **God-Realisation: The Aim of Life:** The goal of human life is to know oneself and by the acquisition of the Truth of oneself to realise God. Having attained communion with God, man experiences immense joy and peace. The Arya Samaj believes that God can be realised through the combination of the three media — deed, knowledge and devotion. To attain God a devotee does not require the services of a prophet or a messenger of God to act as a mediator. The belief that a prophet, messenger or an incarnation of God can lead you to God is not acceptable to the Arya Samaj. A guru (teacher) or a learned individual can act as a guide to mankind. Man can gain knowledge from such beings but he can realise God directly through his own prayer, worship and meditation. The devotion to God is not the cause of the religious controversies and disputes but the different prophets and messengers who profess to know the real path to God-realisation. The founder of the Arya Samaj, Rishi Dayanand, made no such claim, but by his teachings he opened the way for everyone to attain God in his own way.

The Arya Samaj also believes that any individual, however much learned or religious or pious he may be, is not God, nor can he become God. An individual can realise God but he does not lose his identity in God. Propagators of different religious faiths make their followers accept them as their spiritual guides and this leads to worship of man and blind faith. Both God and the individual are absolutely distinct in their qualities, deed and nature. God is the Knower of all things that are to be known. He is Almighty and Omnipresent, therefore the need for Him to take human birth does not arise. He has the capability of performing all His tasks without assuming human or any other form. To confine God into a body is to limit His powers.

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(c) **The Vedas: The Divine Knowledge:** The Arya Samaj, besides believing in the existence of God, also believes in the knowledge of God. Man first acquired this knowledge from God in the form of the Vedas. This knowledge was first revealed by God to four pure rishis. Veda means knowledge. The Vedas have not been created by any individual. The rishis presented the divine knowledge to mankind in its purest form. This divine knowledge is not meant for any one particular class of people. Neither does it oppose anyone. This knowledge was revealed by God at the beginning of the universe for all mankind. The Vedas are not a collection of historical or geographical facts. Later, however, persons and places acquired names similar to those found in the Vedas. Unfortunately, erringly we have misinterpreted them. Similarly, the Vedas do not contain anything which contradicts the laws of nature or scientific principles. It does not contain falsehood which leads to blind faith. The teachings of the Vedas are universal, eternal and for all mankind. As God has provided light, water, air, food, fruit and other necessities for our physical well-being, so has He given us the Vedic knowledge for sharpening our intellect and showing us the path of truth. By following the Vedas intelligently the individual and society can attain happiness.

The language of the Vedas is the most ancient and it is the mother of all languages. Sanskrit and other languages have developed out of the language of the Vedas. Being very ancient it has not been easy for people to understand the Vedic language. Words found in the Vedas therefore came to be associated with words that are found in the languages that developed later. For example, the word **'gau'** in the Vedas meant the rays of the sun, the earth, speech and cow. But in the language of today **gua** means a cow only.

Not being familiar with the derivation of the meanings of the Vedic words, both Western and Indian authors misinterpreted the subject matter of the Vedas. The Vedas that had existed in its purest form for thousands of years was misunderstood. Wrong interpretations made the Vedas a book of myths and fairy tales. Swami Dayanand redeemed the lost glory of the Vedas by giving an interpretation as it was originally intended. The Arya Samaj is today advocating the very principles that were unearthed by Swami Dayanand.

(2) OUTLOOK TOWARDS THE WORLD

How useful a certain movement can be to society and the direction it can give to it can easily be understood if we find out what its worldly outlook is. In the world of today two viewpoints are easily noticeable. One is enjoyment — seeking of worldly pleasures and the other renunciation — discarding of worldly pleasures.

To the seeker of worldly pleasures, this world is a means of attaining joy and happiness. To make merry and enjoy life becomes his chief aim. Pleasures and joys of life can be experienced by our body and our senses. Today such a man is madly in search of that kind of happiness.

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Scientific advance has made the acquisition of pleasure-giving objects easily attainable. To procure them it is necessary to have power and wealth. Therefore today there is a mad desire among people to accumulate as much wealth as possible by any means whatsoever to attain power. To achieve this all sorts of means are being employed, such as murder, fraud, deceit, falsehood and guile, without the least hesitation. The trend, therefore, is the pursuit of worldly pleasures. All his undertakings are centred around this aim, and the result is that he is leading a life of unrest, instability and anxiety.

The other path is the path of renunciation. A man following this path knows that pleasure derived from worldly objects is not lasting. It is here today but not tomorrow. Happiness found in worldly objects is not permanent. In the end man finally gets disappointed with it. This disappointment gives birth to pain. This leads man to realise that true happiness is not to be found in the world around him. He seeks happiness elsewhere. Such a man treats this world with contempt. Finding the world to be an illusion, he wishes to renounce it. He tends to keep himself aloof from worldly affairs and its work. He finds no pleasure in the progress made by this world. He tries to find peace after renouncing this world. He then turns his mind towards spiritual happiness. Such a path is known as the path of renunciation.

It is often believed that the desire to enjoy worldly pleasures is a feature that is prevalent among the westerners, and the problems faced by society are a result of this. The desire to renounce worldly pleasures is a characteristic of the East. But this is not so. Both these tendencies are in existence in both the East and the West to a greater or lesser extent. The easterners are also in pursuit of worldly pleasures. Even in ancient times this tendency was prevalent among the people. But a well-balanced life was led because the means of enjoyment were few. In all lands at all times people following both these paths have existed. But there may have been slight differences over the years.

The aim of the Arya Samaj is to unite the people following different paths. It is not the view of the Vedas that this universe is unreal or full of suffering. Neither does it teach that this life is meant to enjoy oneself to the utmost up to the end of one's life.

This world is a reality. Human life is its basis. To live in this world and to get enjoyment out of it is the right of every individual. There are pleasures as well as sorrows in this world. We should always strive towards the lessening of an individual's sorrows so the he can lead a happy life. The ninth principle of the Arya Samaj states: "Nobody should feel contented with his personal well-being. In the well-being of all should we consider our own well-being."

The Arya Samaj does not consider the happiness of this world only as the ultimate aim of life. Life continues after one's death. The soul is immortal. For its evolution the soul has to be born again and again.

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After this life there is another life to come. While an individual endeavours to attain happiness in this life, he must not forget that the happiness he seeks is not true happiness. Eternal bliss can only be attained after an individual has realised the relationship that exists between his soul and God. The aim of the human soul is to attain God-realisation. Man must not attach himself to worldly objects tenaciously. He must rise above them and seek spiritual unity with God. Worldly objects act as an obstacle in the path of one who is seeking spiritual communion with God. The Vedic way of life enables a householder to enjoy worldly pleasures up to a certain stage. Thereafter he must renounce worldly pleasures to pursue the path of purity, divinity and God-realisation. These stages after the age of fifty are called "Vanaprastha" and "Sannyasa". During these stages the individual must abstain from the pleasures of worldly life and decrease his wants in life. There must be a gradual movement from worldly objects towards the realisation of God.

In this world happiness cannot be attained by following only the path of pleasures or only the path of renunciation. It is better for us to remember the advice given to man in the 40th Chapter of the Yajurveda. The ninth mantra of this chapter says: "Those who are hankering after worldly pleasures and material knowledge are falling blindly into a ditch, but those who are only pursuing a spiritual path are heading towards greater disaster."

Then what is one to do?

The eleventh mantra in the very same chapter says: **Avidyayá mrityum tirtvá, vidyayá amritam ashnute** — that is, relieve yourself from the sorrows of this world through scientific knowledge, and gain immortality through divine knowledge.

The Arya Samaj is attempting to bring about happiness and peace in this world by adopting this Vedic outlook.

(3) ETHICALLY DISCIPLINED LIFE

By understanding the Vedic view of life it is clear that the Arya Samaj also desires that an individual should be virtuous and disciplined. To be able to make good progress in one's life a sound character is a prerequisite. It is aptly said that if wealth is lost then nothing is lost; if health is lost then something is lost but if character is lost, everything is lost. To be able to possess a sound character a virtuous life has to be led. An individual should be truthful, loving, kind, tolerant, forgiving, reliable, generous, pure, just and dutiful. He should try to cultivate these qualities within him. The most important requirement for upliftment in life is not possession of knowledge or wealth, but the practice of virtues.

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The Arya Samaj lays great emphasis on this aspect of an individual's life. In the world today immorality, greed, bribery, deceit, violence and dishonesty are rife. So long as we are endeavouring to gain worldly pleasures, we would be exposed to these undesirable qualities. We must endeavour to lead controlled and virtuous lives. Virtuous conduct and moral life should be our guiding light.

To be able to lead such an honourable life celibacy is very important. Chastity is the step to a successful life. Control of our senses is very important. If free rein is given to our senses we shall lead immoral lives. Therefore the Arya Samaj has laid down certain rules that govern the relationship between man and woman. Today unlimited freedom is being given to matters pertaining to sex. This is detrimental to a happy life. Unrestrained sex is harmful to the body, mind and soul. It brings about chaos in society.

The Vedic way makes provision in marriage for the householder to derive his pleasures. Exposure of certain parts of the body and dancing in close embrace are not desirable. They excite the passion and affect sound morals. The Vedic scripture stresses that a man should regard every female besides his wife as his sister or mother. Similarly, a female should regard every male besides her husband as her brother or father. With such pure mind society can hope to be peaceful. The life of the individual can thus be happy.

The Path to a Virtuous Life: That the life of every individual should be virtuous, disciplined, morally sound and religious the Vedic rishis have outlined a certain code in life. This system is associated with the sixteen Vedic sacraments. For the purification of the mind, the intellect and the soul these religious ceremonies have been laid down. These ceremonies are followed right from the period of conception to death in the life of an individual. **Sanskar** means to purify, reform or to influence. From birth as the child advances in years these sixteen sanskars are performed so that the child would follow a well defined religious path. These sanskars act as a direction in life just as the road signboards advise the travellers of the course that they should be taking to reach their destination. The Arya Samaj wishes to propagate these sixteen sacraments so that every individual can become virtuous, disciplined and pure.

(4) Development of Individuality

Very little thought has been given to the question as to what form an individual's life should take and how he should develop to his utmost. The ordinary man today does not know what his goal in life is, why he is living, what will make his life meaningful. He thinks he has to go on living, obtain means of living, satisfy the desires of the body by any means, and when he has to die he will leave this world. This is the thought of the common man today.

Man's life cannot be without any aim like the other creatures. The

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Vedic rishis have worked out a definite programme which would help in the development of man. The Arya Samaj accepts this programme and wishes to disseminate it throughout the world. What is this plan of life? Man's life has been divided into the following four stages to enable him to reach his goal:

(a) **Preparation for Life:** Man's childhood stage is the preparatory stage of a person's life. It is a period during which he undergoes physical, mental and spiritual development. This is his period of education. During this stage learning is the predominant aim. Education is not acquired for the prime purpose of obtaining his bread and butter. Education helps in the development of his physical being and his mental and intellectual faculties, and in his spiritual growth. Education is not also learning the three R's whereby he can read, write and work out numerical sums. Education must help in the development of his entire being or personality. Education as a means of earning a livelihood is secondary to the real purpose. That will follow of its own accord. During this period of their growth boys and girls must strictly follow a pure and chaste life. They must lead an austere and well-disciplined life. This stage of their life is called brahmacharya ashram.

(b) **Period of Activity and Fulfilment of Personal Desires:** As soon as the preparatory period comes to an end, the stage arrives when the individual has to venture out into the world to achieve the things that he needs. Now he has to take care of himself, his family, and also see to the needs of the society in which he lives. To achieve his aims and objects many paths are open to him. Here education and ability play a prominent part. He is young and energetic, and he has an ambition. With these means he appears on the worldly stage. His personal drive and efforts bring wealth and prosperity to him. This brings a certain amount of power to him which he can wield successfully. The opportunity to enjoy the good things of life and be happy arrives for him.

Girls and boys reach the stage of adulthood. They have the natural desire to enjoy what the world has to offer and be happy. This necessitates their coming together by marriage. Marriage is an institution which requires that their joint life must be based on moral and righteous principles. Their behaviour should not be indicative of wantonness or animal lust. It is for this reason that they take a vow on their wedding day to work in harmony and to be faithful to each other. The married couple can bring about the fulfilment of its ambitions and desires through its companionship. The life of one is incomplete without the other. The union of both physically and spiritually helps to give satisfaction to its cravings and wants. Its activities and joint efforts keep the world moving. Its physical union results in the arrival of offspring possessing the qualities and the physical appearance of the parents. The offspring will not only inherit the assets of the parents but also the culture of the parents. This second stage is called the "grihastha ashram" or the life of a householder.

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(c) **Period of Life of Selfless Service** and (d) **Period of Union with the Supreme Being:** Man's efforts are not limited to the acquisition of material benefits, wealth and power. His life is not meant to be devoted entirely to the satisfaction of personal wants and desires. He has to move forward from here. After possessing everything he has desired, there comes a time in his life when these things lose their value to him. He becomes indifferent towards them. Long experience and maturity teach him that permanent happiness is not to be found in worldly things and sensual pleasures. Neither is the possession of these things his ultimate aim. Having passed his years of youth, he advances towards old age when he relinquishes responsibility in worldly affairs so that the generation that is to succeed him takes over from where he has left. Now he is in quest of salvation. For the solution of the financial problems confronting society such selfless workers are extremely important. At this stage the individual is only concerned with his spiritual progress. He gives his selfless service to the world at large voluntarily. The society benefits immensely from his experience, knowledge and accomplishments. The feelings of jealousy and animosity are absent in such a person. He develops a detached outlook towards the world having no sentimental attachment to anything. For him fame, official posts, and the desire to wield power have no meaning. He does not even want that he should henceforth be remembered for his services. He even goes to the extent of severing all relationship with his kith and kin. His entire being and personality become submerged in the welfare of his fellow beings. He is no longer the member of a particular family, or the citizen of a particular country, or belonging to a particular race. He is a member of a community which makes up the world. When man begins to serve mankind selflessly, he establishes oneness with God. It is a maxim that God can be best served if we serve our fellowmen. This union with God gives man great pleasure. This period of selfless service and establishing contact with God is called the age of "vanaprastha" and "sannyasa". This stage prepares the individual for union with God in the world beyond.

These four stages — brahmacharya, grihastha, vanaprastha and sannyasa ashrams — are definite stages that will lead to the fuller development of an individual — physically, intellectually and spiritually. An individual's progress is also the progress of a society. The Arya Samaj regards these stages of development essential for man and it intends spreading this Vedic way of life throughout the world.

(5) Development of Social Consciousness

As there are different and definite stages laid down by the rishis for the personal development of an individual, so, to strengthen the bonds between individuals and thus bring about social consciousness among individuals, the rishis have formulated definite plans which, if put into practice, will be beneficial to the world, is the firm belief of the Arya Samaj.

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The principal means of attaining social consciousness are knowledge and education; power and stable government; production and wealth derived therefrom; and industry and organisation. With these means it is possible for a society or a country to make tangible progress. Therefore, wherever an organised society comes into being an attempt is made to gain control over these means. Justifiable or unjustifiable methods are employed to keep control over them.

The question arises: how could these means be put into use correctly and a proper balance be maintained among them? There should be a scheme whereby these means could be profitably used for the benefit and progress of mankind. History tells that there was a time when learned and knowledgeable people and the priestly class wielded tremendous authority. Everyone was virtually under their jurisdiction. At a later stage in history their authority was replaced by the rule of monarchs. Powerful monarchs and kings and their vassals maintained their rule over the people by means of their might. The priests often gave their opinions on controversial matters under the fear of their rulers. Their opinions were often given to please the rulers. When the industrial era commenced, the power of the monarchs began to fade. Power began to be wielded by those who possessed wealth. Those who ruled were influenced by the wealthy. Thus money assumed a place of importance in society. Money became an important instrument to decide matters. But the people who really brought about this affluence and wealth were the labourers and the tillers. They realised their tremendous power and they formed unions. From the merchant class the rule passed into the hands of the people. This was the beginning of democracy.

History has thus shown how at different periods the means of social development were controlled by different groups. Even today throughout the world various forces are at work that tend to gain control over these factors. In as much as these means are important for social progress, there is a great need for proper control over them. If we carefully study the general characteristics of man, we will discover that he is inclined to certain tendencies. An individual's aptitude drives him towards something that he prefers. Some are seekers of knowledge, while others prefer to be administrators; some wish to make a mark in the commercial world, while others prove to be skilled tradesmen and craftsmen.

Before we consider how best man can use these means for the benefit of society, we should know what man's approach to life is. We have already seen how man, having satisfied his desires, develops a feeling of disinterest in worldly matters. This is for the betterment of society. But today the object of man's life has become more the satisfaction of his personal desires. Therefore, there is a tendency among people to get everything within its control. This gives rise to friction and dissatisfaction. Hence it becomes necessary for society to adopt a sane ap-

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There is no difference between one individual and another. We will have to make this ideal of the Vedas a reality by equating the entire human race in terms of a single individual. The Vedas say:

The learned people who make up the society are its head. The people who defend the society are its arms. The people who manage the financial matters of the society are its stomach; and the people who are labourers and the unskilled members of the society are its feet. The four parts mentioned above are important parts of the body. All parts are useful and they serve the body. If these parts of our body function properly then the body is healthy and free from disease. When these parts of the body develop normally man is happy. Similarly, the learned people, the defenders of society, the merchant class, and the workers form the essential parts of the society. All of them together make up the society. Their well-being, unity among them, and living with dignity as citizens are of great importance to the society. If any of these parts is defective then the society becomes weak.

Because individuals differ in their tastes, and because of different levels of development in their mental and physical powers, there will arise these four social classes. These four groups will not be expected to demand their individual rights and privileges but they would be expected to do their duties sincerely. In this way the feeling of being superior to the other will not arise and they will all work shoulder to shoulder. The feeling of brotherliness will be in every one of them.

The creation of such a society that works for the common good of all is not impossible. It will require that every individual will have to adopt a correct outlook towards the world as a whole. And this will make the creation of such a society simple. The people will have to cultivate the outlook that their aim is not to seek pleasures and gain control over things they desire. They will also have to realise that they are proach by balancing and unifying these forces for the common good of mankind. But how is this to be done?

Firstly, we must treat everyone on an equal basis. Every individual must be entitled to equal respect and honour. Every individual must place the interest of society above that of himself. Although an individual enjoys personal freedom, he will have to suppress his personal interest and liberty for the good of society. He will have to work together with others, realising that everyone has the right to progress. All should be happy in the thought that the welfare of every individual is also the welfare of our society. Then any individual, any race or any nation will not be considered superior or inferior by virtue of its religion, colour or birth. The Vedas declare that all of us are the children of God.

not free to act as they wish. But in turn they must remember that they have come into this world to live peacefully with others. Adopting a balanced outlook towards a life of pleasure and a life of renunciation will make it possible for such a society to exist.

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The result of this would be that a learned person, a scholar, a doctor, a magistrate, a judge, a lawyer, a principal, a professor, a scientist, a writer, a poet or a priest will not work for his personal gain but will work in the interest of society. Earning money in return for his service will not be a guiding factor but the legitimate use of his ability for the benefit of society will be his aim. Those who govern the people will not be denying the people their right to live a decent life but will protect their rights and privileges. They will not suppress the citizens but assist them. The merchants and industrialists will see that the material prosperity derived is distributed equitably so that everyone will benefit from the national income. Similarly, the working class people will not think of doing the least amount of work and asking for higher wages.

This ideal development of social consciousness among the individuals who make up our society as laid down in the Vedas is called the classification of the society into four useful groups or **varna vyavastha.** The word 'varna' does not denote colour or caste by birth. It means to select or choose. Each individual will select his work according to his nature, likes and ability. These four **varnas** are called by the names brahman, kshatriya, vaishya and shudra. The society can give them any other names.

(6) World Unity and Universal Brotherhood

We have an ancient maxim: **Vasudhaiva kutumbakam.** It means that the entire world is a single family. The need to visualise the various communities that live in this world as a single family was never nearer the truth than it is today. Science has brought the world's inhabitants very close to one another. The question of time and distance between nations has become a thing of the past. The countries of this world have come so close to one another that they appear to be small villages belonging to a large district. If humanity has made such tremendous progress then the various nations can have no objection to uniting and becoming one.

The difficulty is caused by narrow nationalism. The industrial revolution of England and the French Revolution gave rise to nationalism which spread like wildfire throughout the world in the nineteenth century. With the passing of the years the underdeveloped countries that had suffered under the yoke of colonialism gradually gained independence. But nationalism brought about self-interest and selfishness among nations. Universal brotherhood was destined to have a natural death. The spirit of nationalism gave rise to Nazism in Germany and Fascism in Italy, and the result was the bloodbath that followed during two world wars. Even today the world is tottering on the brink of another war. One power or race growls at the other. Each one is eager to spring and maul the other. The greatest political problem facing the world today is how to get nationalism under control. Nationalism

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which once nurtured the progress of humanity has now become a force of obstruction and narrow-mindedness.

The only way the tide of nationalism could be stemmed is by fostering the idea of universal brotherhood. The world is trying to move in that direction. No matter how partial or incomplete the attempt may be the League of Nations and the United Nations Organisation came into being as a result of the same spirit.

To create universal brotherhood it will be necessary to evolve a form of government that would cater for the needs of the entire world. The nations that would make up this world government whilst maintaining their identities would have to set aside selfish interests. In this way, the different countries, while remaining independent, will participate in world government and work as a family for the good of the world and in the cause of world peace. It is for this very reason that Swami Dayanand, in the sixth chapter of his book "The Light of Truth", has expressed the desire for a universal empire.

It is an accepted truth that this earth will always be inhabited by people of different races, different languages, different colours, and of different religious faiths. Each of them will also be citizens of its own land of birth. There was a time when a country was dear and near to a person. It was something sacred. Its welfare was the chief concern of the individual. But the time has now come when this love for one's own country will have to be transferred to something greater. Today the spread of narrow nationalism has brought about hatred and violence in the world. The artificial geographic boundaries have divided countries and human beings. When one being sheds the blood of another to settle boundary disputes it becomes reminiscent of ancient days when people were barbaric and uncivilised. In reality the whole earth sustains all of us like our mother. She is our mother earth. Therefore the Vedas say: "This earth is my mother, and I am her child." (**Mata bhumih putroaham prithivyáh** — Atharva Veda). About this earth the Veda says: This earth is the abode of those who speak different languages; and who follow different religious paths. May this earth, like the gentle cow, bless us from all directions with food, wealth and riches!

May we regard this earth as our mother! May we develop the spirit of universal love for all mankind! May all the countries on this earth unite; and may they establish a universal form of government for all! This will bring about the lasting peace that the world requires today. Then only will entire mankind rise to great heights; and then also will man develop physically, mentally and spiritually.

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ARYA SAMAJ

PART II

THE MANIFOLD ACTIVITIES AND SERVICES OF THE ARYA SAMAJ

Swami Dayanand founded the Arya Samaj in 1875 with the aim of promoting the spiritual, social and physical well-being of all mankind. To accomplish its objective the Arya Samaj has in the past century rendered commendable service in a number of spheres. Although the Arya Samaj is universal in character, its principal field of activity has been India and the Hindu society. Many persons, societies and organisations have undoubtedly played a prominent role in the resurgence of India yet it could be said without hesitation that these bodies received their inspiration from the writings of Swami Dayanand and their activities have their origin in the work of the Arya Samaj. It is for this reason that Swami Dayanand has been called the "Maker of Modern India". Most of the fields in which Mahatma Gandhi toiled throughout his life had their beginnings in the works of Dayanand. Dayanand prepared the field; cleared the dense growth; removed the huge rocks and other hindrances; and he made the undulating lands level and fertile for others to cultivate the soil. The ground was well prepared for those who followed him to reap a rich harvest. He opened roadways and footpaths through rugged forests. It made the travels of those who came after him an easy one.

Today there are many things that seem very simple, clear and easy. But a century ago the very same things were complicated and difficult. The greatness of Dayanand and the Arya Samaj which he established lies in their facing courageously hostilities, oppositions and difficulties which confronted them. In the earlier days the followers of the principles of the Arya Samaj had to endure many hardships. They faced communal boycott from their opponents. They were prevented from maintaining any social contact with their fellowmen. They were forbidden from obtaining water from public wells and were subjected to assault, violence and insults by their opponents. Many even lost their lives to uphold their principles. It is evident today that many Hindus have accepted about 75 to 80 per cent of the teachings of the Arya Samaj and act accordingly. Hindu society is indebted to the Arya Samaj for the change and reformed way of life that we see today.

The many different activities and social services undertaken by the Arya Samaj for almost a century are briefly outlined herein:

1. Religious Activities and Reform

(a) **Freedom of Thought:** In the religious sphere the Arya Samaj has vigorously campaigned for the freedom of thought. Earlier all the

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words uttered by a holy person were regarded as authoritative. None dared to criticise the interpolated Sanskrit verses and non-Vedic teachings of the orthodox schools. It was the Arya Samaj that revolutionised the religious thought and ideas of the people. The Arya Samaj taught the people to think rationally. They were asked to determine the value of a precept in terms of the degree of truth it contained. They were urged to use their intellect and to reason out things for themselves before accepting them. The scientific truths and the laws that govern nature were given their rightful place in religion.

(b) **Monotheism:** The Hindu society was during this period essentially polytheistic. The people believed in the existence of many gods. They also believed that the various gods and goddesses existed independently, and that each of them was endowed with a certain power of its own. They also believed that these gods and goddesses resided in certain holy abodes of their own such as 'Baikunth', 'Kailash', etc. The Arya Samaj restored the ancient Vedic belief that there is only one God and that the various names expressed as gods and goddesses were merely attributes of one and only one God.

(c) **Spreading the Teachings of the Vedas:** Every Hindu sincerely accepts the Vedas as his sacred scriptures. But strangely enough in those days no one knew its contents. No one recited the Vedic verses or attempted to expound its teachings. Even the Gayatri Mantra, the most sacred verse in the Vedas, was taught to only a privileged section of the society. The Arya Samaj prides itself for having brought the Vedas out into the open so that everyone irrespective of caste or creed can have access to it.

(d) **Religious Sacraments (Sanskars);** The Arya Samaj has revived the performance of the sixteen Vedic religious sacraments. These sacraments and religious rites had been lost because unlimited customs and traditional rituals had replaced them over the years. Swami Dayanand made a good study of the Vedas and propounded a uniform system of performing these rites. The practice of performing meaningless rituals and sacrificing animals to appease God were shown to have no religious sanction. He backed his arguments with truth that he had discovered in the Vedas.

(e) **Yajna and Religious Services:** Religious awakening among the people was made possible through the missionaries of the Arya Samaj. Congregational religious services were held and yajnas performed in various villages.

(f) **Dispelling of Blind Religious Faith:** People had implicit faith in planetary influences (nakshatra), astrology, omens, evil spirits, ghosts and witchcraft. They made vows to their deity for the fulfilment of their desires and believed in miracles. The Arya Samaj was the first body to denounce these malpractices.

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2. Activities of the Arya Samaj in the Social Field

(a) **Repudiation and Non-Recognition of the Caste System:** The Hindu society was divided by the pernicious caste system into thousands of sub-sections. The Arya Samaj repudiated this belief of the Hindus and told them that the Vedas have nowhere sanctioned this evil of caste superiority by birth. The Samaj told them that every individual was equal to the other socially. It pointed out to the people that differences in birth, colour or caste did not exist. The Samaj laid the foundations whereby every individual was entitled to be educated, and that each individual could make equal progress according to his ability. Formerly, marriage ties could take place between families only if both belonged to the same caste. The Arya Samaj threw such beliefs overboard and regarded suitability and compatibility to be the main considerations in arranging matrimonial bonds.

(b) **Eating Customs:** The Hindus practised discrimination very rigidly in their eating practices. A person belonging to the high caste would partake of a meal served for him only if it was cooked by one who was a "brahmin". One born of a lower caste could not expect to dine in the company of a so-called superior caste. The influence of the Arya Samaj has eradicated these discriminatory eating customs.

(c) **Feeding After Death and Meaningless Spending of Money:** It was customary for the Hindus to invite hundreds of people to take part in a feast after the death of some one in the family. Similarly, the Hindus were compelled to spend lavishly to entertain guests on occasions such as weddings, births, and other functions because custom demanded it. In a country where poverty is a common sight, such practices forced people to raise loans which they were never able to repay in their life time. The Arya Samaj has succeeded to a great extent in eradicating these evil practices.

3. Removal of Untouchability

The stigma that had darkened the name of the Hindus was the practice of untouchability. This was an off-shoot of the pernicious caste system. A person of a lower caste was considered to have committed a great sin if he erringly touched another person of a higher caste. The people who belonged to the lower caste suffered great indignities at the hands of those who belonged to the upper classes. These untouchables were treated most inhumanly by the so-called superior Hindus. A forceful and powerful agitation against this evil was first initiated by the Arya Samaj. The Arya Samaj opened a body called the **Dalitoddharak Mandal** (Society for the Upliftment of the Depressed Classes) in every province of India. In the Indian National Congress Lala Lajpatrai and Swami Shraddhanand were the first ones to raise their voices against this inhuman treatment of the depressed classes by the Hindus. In recent times Mahatma Gandhi was prepared to give up his precious life fighting for the removal of untouchability by fasting unto death.

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4. Emancipation of Women

The condition of women during the Middle Ages had become very pitiful. To improve their position the Arya Samaj has served them in the following ways:

(a) **Education of Women:** During the Vedic Age the women understood the Vedas and some of them became sages or rishis. But ironically, later on, women were denied the right to be educated. Swami Dayanand saw in this the cause of the downfall of Hindu Society. He laid great emphasis on the literacy of women. For this reason girls' schools and educational institutions were inaugurated by the Arya Samaj.

(b) **Undesirable Marriages:** The Arya Samaj raised its powerful voice against child marriage, old age marriage, incompatible marriage and polygamy. The **purdah system** — (an unhealthy system which forbade a woman to expose her face to the view of males). As a result their faces were kept practically covered both indoors and outdoors during the day), and the dowry system were also attacked strongly by the Arya Samaj. The dowry system was a very humiliating and a ruinous system. According to this the father of a female had to pay large sums in cash and kind before he could get his daughter married. Through the efforts of the Arya Samaj the lot of women was greatly improved.

(c) **Widow Marriage:** An evil consequence of child marriage and old age marriage was the prevalence of young widows. Women who were ignorant of the world around them became widows at a tender age. The young widow's life was intolerable in Hindu society. The Arya Samaj worked unceasingly to remove the disabilities from which the widow suffered. In bringing about reforms to the life of these young widows Sir Gangaram Trust has done praiseworthy work. It has become famous for its efforts in this noble cause. The trust has opened many 'Vidhwa Ashrams' (centres where widows have been cared for) in the northern parts of India. Thousands of widows for whom life was truly a living hell were able to lead purposeful and happy lives under the roofs of these ashrams. Today, of course, marriage of widows has become an acceptable fact in Hindu Society.

5. Foreign Travels

It will be regarded by anyone as a joke today to learn that a few decades ago foreign travel to a Hindu was a sin. If a Hindu visited foreign lands he was required to undergo a purification ceremony. In ancient times and during the reign of King Ashoka (250 B.C.) the Hindus visited all parts of the world. But a few years ago the Hindus were like the frog that lived in a well. For the frog only the well existed and there was nothing else beyond it. One of the causes of India's downfall was the prohibition of foreign travels. European ambassadors at-

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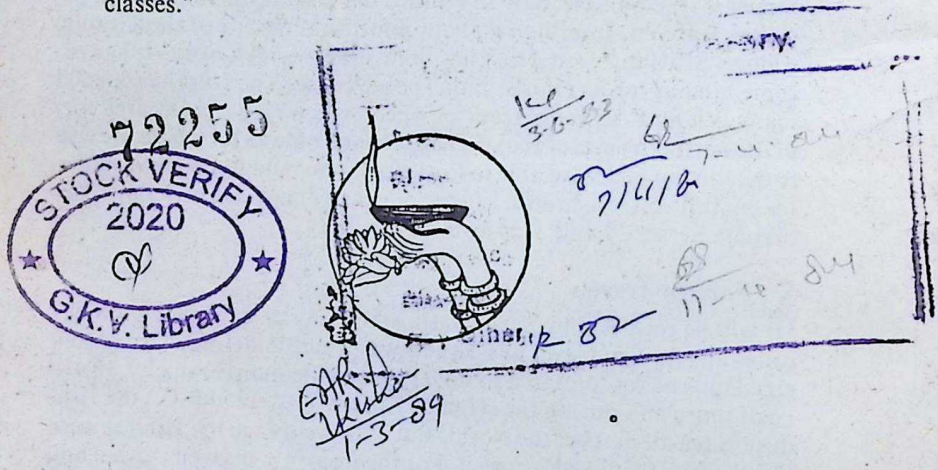
tended the courts of King Akbar and Shivaji, but it did not occur to these rulers that the Indians should be sent abroad to learn something from either the English or the French. Swami Dayanand condemned those who thought that foreign travel was sinful. He sent his disciple Shyamji Krishna Varma to England and Germany to study science and other allied subjects.

6. Services in the Field of Education

The progress of any race and nation is dependent upon the education that its people receive. Swami Dayanand had understood this truth and therefore he laid great emphasis on the education of both girls and boys. Imparting of education on a national basis was done primarily under the auspices of the Arya Samaj. The year 1901 saw the establishment of the Gurukul Kangri by Swami Shraddhanand. This was the first national institution in India. It was conducted independently of the efforts made by the British government to educate the masses. The 'Shantiniketan' of Rabindranath Tagore and other national institutions of education were founded much later on similar basis. The subjects were taught through the medium of the Hindi language for the first time at the Gurukul College instead of the English language. The Arya Samaj was instrumental in opening many gurukulas, Dayanand Anglo-Vedic Colleges, Girls' Colleges and primary schools throughout India. Praising the work of the Arya Samaj in the field of education, Shri Jawaharlal Nehru has written in his book "The Discovery of India" (p 399) as follows:

> "The Arya Samaj has done very good work in the spread of education both among boys and girls, in improving the condition of women and raising the status and standards of the depressed classes."



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ERRATA

Page	83:	Read "Building" in place of "Bhawan".
,,	90:	Bibliography — Read "Boodhav" as "Boodhay".
,,	91:	Second paragraph — Read "Bisakhi" as "Baisakhi".
,,	103:	Omit the line above the first paragraph.
,,	111:	Line 7 — Read "yajna" as "yajnas".
,,	114:	Line 9 — Read "personal" as "persons".
,,	129:	Line 20 — Read "school of" as "school to".
,,	157:	Line 11 — Read "has" as "had".
,,	159:	End of second paragraph — Read "Ayra" as "Arya".
,,	187:	Last paragraph (tenth line) — Read "cutomary" as "customary".
,,	196:	Last line, after "a sane ap-": See page 197, paragraph four, last two lines and the paragraph that follows.
,,	197:	Paragraph four, after "that they are", read the last four lines on the page.

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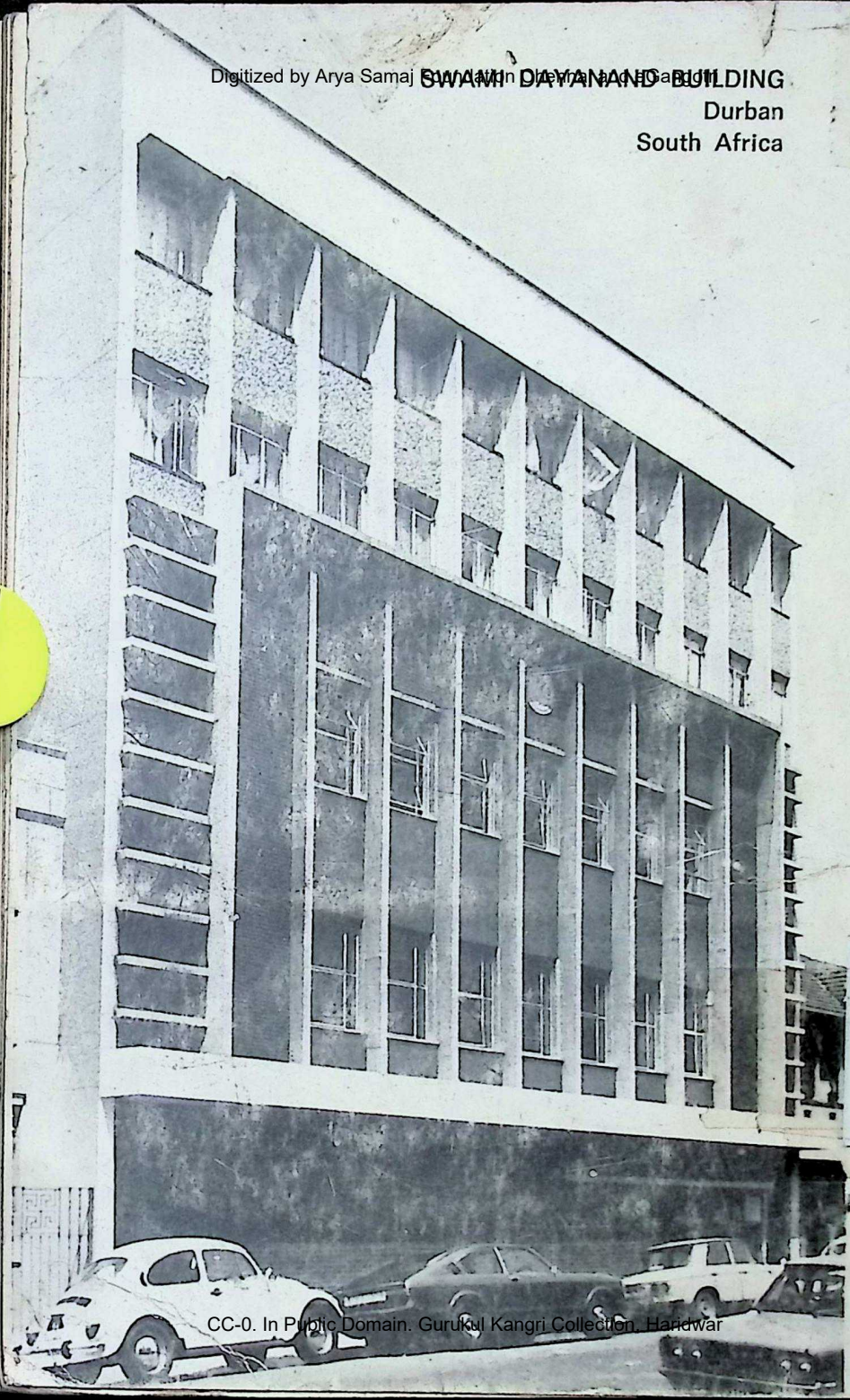
SWAMI DAYANAND BUILDING

Durban

South Africa



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